

The Sublime Revelation (Al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī)

A COLLECTION OF SIXTY-TWO DISCOURSES



SHAIKH ‘ABD AL-QĀDIR AL-JĪLĀNĪ
TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC BY MUHTAR HOLLAND

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[Al-Faḥḥ ar-Rabbānī]

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Rabbanā: “*Our Lord!*” Qur’ān (2:286)

Cover calligraphy: Rohana Filippi

Using watercolor and wax to combine the beauty of Arabic script with the Qur’ānic message on paper, Italian artist Rohana Filippi has developed her own artistic style through personal research and inner inspiration. Her art is entirely devoted to “expressing Allāh’s presence everywhere.”

Ms. Filippi, who currently resides in New York, has lived and worked in England, Mexico, Colombia and the United States.

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Dedication

This edition of *Al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī* is dedicated to
the Holy Prophet Muḥammad
(may Allāh bless him and give him peace),
the Saints of Allāh [the *awliyā'*],
the Righteous [*ṣāliḥīn*] and the Believers [*mu'minīn*],
may the good pleasure and mercy of Allāh be upon them all.



Publisher's Preface

The words of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī can undoubtedly be considered among the most precious treasures of Islām. Indeed, Al-Baz Publishing was founded with the intention of providing fine English translations of his works for the benefit of English-speaking Muslims everywhere, in the spirit of wishing to share the benefit and blessing we have received ourselves at his hand.

I first became interested in Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in learning from my own spiritual guide and benefactor Bapak Muhammad Sumohadiwidjojo, founder of the Subud brotherhood (may Allāh be well pleased with him), that Allāh had bestowed on the Shaikh the same opening and contact that Bapak himself received from Allāh, and which he has passed on to us.

Anyone familiar with the *latihan kejiwaan* of Subud will know that to be so honored, as Bapak was by Almighty God, is a rare occurrence in the history of mankind, for such grace is usually bestowed on very few of His creatures. My interest thus being aroused, I sought out the surviving manuscripts from their various repositories around the world, and began the task of having them translated. From the very first reading it was apparent to me that what Bapak had said about the Shaikh was true.

O reader! This endeavor is for you! If you find benefit in the reading of these discourses, pray that Allāh bless the Shaikh, and pray for us too, that our offering may find acceptance in His sight!

Ruslan Moore
Al-Baz Publishing, Inc.
November, 1992

Acknowledgments

All praise is due to Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful!

We bear witness that there is no god except Allāh, and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh!

Our Lord, thank You for giving us this wholesome task!



Grateful thanks to Muhtar Holland for devoting years of his life to translating these works; may Allāh bless him! Thanks also to the many who have helped make this publication possible, among them the following:

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Liliana Gardner for design fundamentals

Frances Gardner for the flowers

Rohana Filippi for the cover art

Translator's Introduction¹

Of all the linguistic problems to be resolved in the process of translating these sixty-two discourses from the original Arabic of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him), few presented such difficulty as the title of the book: *al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī*. These were, in fact, the last of the many thousands of words to be rendered into English! *The Sublime Revelation*, if not a strictly literal equivalent, is nevertheless acceptable, we trust, as faithful to the spirit of the original title. The following explanations may assist the reader to endorse this conclusion—or to suggest an alternative:

First of all, it should be noted that a perfectly literal translation of the Arabic for “the big book” would be “the-book the-big.” In other words, the Arabic adjective follows the noun—and the definite article is prefixed to *both* elements. Thus, assuming that we accept our choice of English equivalents, *al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī* comes out word for word as “the-Revelation the-Sublime.” Let us keep to the Arabic order for the moment, as we explore the full significance of the key terms *Faṭḥ* and *Rabbānī*:

Like most words in the Arabic language, *Faṭḥ* is derived from a root of three consonants—in this case *f-t-h*. Each root contains, as it were, a particular germ of meaning, or a basic idea, which develops and displays various aspects through the ramifications of the root. Since the germ of meaning contained in the root *f-t-h* is the basic idea of “openness,” we may expect to discover various aspects of this concept in the many branches—the actual words—growing out of this root.

To give just a few everyday examples: *FaTaḤa* = he opened; *FuṭiḤa* = it was opened/an opening was made; *yaFTaḤu* = he opens/will open;

¹ For more general background information, including an explanation of the names and titles of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, a short account of his life in Baghdād, and a brief survey of his literary works, please refer to “Concerning the Author” (p. 465), where the editor has reproduced a slightly modified version of the Translator’s Introduction to Revelations of the Unseen, a companion volume in this series.

FāTiḤ = opener; *maFTūḤ* = open/opened; *miFTāḤ* = a key; *iFtiTāḤ* = an introduction. From these few examples alone, it should already be apparent that the three root-letters weave a common thread of meaning, spinning a web of words to form the vocabulary of “openness.”

Of course, when it comes to translating any given derivative of the root *f-t-ḥ*, the context is liable to remind us that useful derivatives of the English word “open” are far more limited in number and scope. Faced with the word *miḥṭāḥ*, we must discard “an instrument-for-opening” in favor of “a key.” It is probably true to say that the simple verb *fataḥa* almost always conveys the meaning “he opened”—in some sense. For the purpose of translation, however, the sense may require the choice of an English expression in which the idea of “opening” is merely implicit, as in: “he conquered [a country]” or “he allowed [access to...]” or “he solved [a problem]” or “he revealed [a secret]” or “he informed [someone about...].” When the subject of the verb is Allāh (Exalted is He), the sense in which “He opened” may call for the rendering: “He helped [someone] to be victorious,” or “He bestowed [great blessings upon someone].”

In grammatical terms, *fath* is the infinitive noun or substantive corresponding to the simple verb *fataḥa*. Its basic meaning is therefore “to open” or “an opening.” At the risk of shifting the focus of attention away from this primary signification, however, the translator must sometimes respond to the context by choosing an etymologically unrelated word, such as: “a beginning” or “a conquest; a victory” or “a gift of grace” or “a revelation” or “a solution; an elucidation”—to mention but a few of the many possibilities. Let us consider two of the many verses [*āyāt*] of the Qur’ān in which derivatives of *f-t-ḥ* occur:

They say: “Do you speak to them of what Allāh has opened/disclosed/revealed [*fataḥa*] to you...?” (2:76)

Surely We have opened for you a clear opening/given you a clear victory [*innā fataḥnā laka fathan mubīnā*]. (48:1)

The 48th Sūra of the Qur’ān is entitled *al-Fath*—usually translated “Victory.” Yet another derivative of the root *f-t-ḥ* appears in the well-known title of the very first Sūra of the Book: *al-Fātiḥa*—“The Opener.”

The plural of the noun *fath* is *futūḥ*—as in *Futūḥ al-Ghaib* [Revelations of the Unseen], the title of another collection of discourses

by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (may Allāh be well pleased with him). There is even a kind of superplural, *futūḥāt*, a plural of the already plural *futūḥ*—as in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* [The Meccan Revelatory Disclosures], the title of a famous work by Shaikh Ibn al-‘Arabī (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him).

One very intriguing feature of *The Sublime Revelation* is the inclusion, here and there within the body of the text, of several notes and observations by the recorder of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir’s words. Although most of these parenthetical remarks are quite brief, they do enable the reader to savor the atmosphere of those long-ago sessions [*majālis*] in the schoolhouse or the guesthouse in Baghdād, by supplying impressions with something remarkably like the effect of a modern audio-video recording! In the only extensive passage of this kind, at the end of the Twenty-sixth Discourse (pp. 187–188), the recorder has provided us with a beautiful account of how the Shaikh would conduct himself at the beginning of a session, describing the physical movements he used to make while uttering various prayers and invocations. After this preamble, we are told, “he would start speaking about whatever revelations of the Unseen [*futūḥ al-ghaib*] Allāh might cause [*yaftahu*] his tongue to utter, without notes or prepared text....” Surely an important key [*miṭāḥ*] to understanding more than just the titles—significant as they undoubtedly are—of both *Futūḥ al-Ghaib* [Revelations of the Unseen] and *al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī* [The Sublime Revelation]!

We may now turn our wide-open eyes to a scrutiny of the second element in the Arabic title of the book in our hands: *ar-Rabbānī*.²

In this case, the three-consonant root of the word is *r-b-b*. It is difficult to find a single English word with which to pinpoint the germ of meaning, or the basic idea, contained within this particular root. The expression “caring ownership” may come fairly close.

The simple verb *RaBBa* assumes the form *taRuBBu* in the second person singular of the present tense, and occurs as such in a tradition [*ḥadīth*] of the Prophet (may Allāh bless him and give him peace):

You have wealth which you preserve, and of which you take care, and which you foster as a man fosters his child [*lakum ni‘matun tarubbuhā*].

² The prefix *ar-* is simply the definite article (equivalent to the English word “the”). In the Arabic script itself, whether handwritten or printed, it always appears as *al*. In the system of transliteration adopted for this publication, however, the romanized spelling reflects the actual pronunciation, in which the *l-* is assimilated (in certain cases) to the sound of the following letter.

According to the Arabic lexicographers, the primary signification of the noun *rabb* is “bringing [a thing] to a state of completion by degrees.” Depending on the context, the word then comes to mean: “a lord, possessor, owner, or proprietor” or “a lord, master or chief, to whom obedience is paid” or “a rearer, fosterer, bringer-up, feeder or nourisher” or “a completer or accomplisher.”

With the definite article, *ar-Rabb* is properly applied only to the One Almighty God, Allāh, who is *Rabb al-arbāb* [The Lord of lords].

The addition of the intensive adjectival suffix *-ānī* gives us *Rabbānī*, “pertaining to the Lord.” Some dictionaries offer “divine” as a one-word alternative to this exact, though rather clumsy phrase. Divine indeed is that which pertains to the Lord, but the word is more appropriately reserved for use as the equivalent of *Ilāhī*.

Can we not avail ourselves of the Anglo-Saxon elements in our English vocabulary? Suppose we take the noun “lord” as corresponding closely enough to the Arabic *rabb*, add our own adjectival suffix “-ly,” and then capitalize the initial letter of the word—will “Lordly” suffice?

For certain purposes, possibly, but The Lordly Revelation does not seem quite fitting for our title. Perhaps the elevation of that initial to upper case status is not enough to dispel the pejorative meanings—“haughty, imperious, lofty, disdainful”—that cling to the ordinary word “lordly”?

How about our Classical resources, then? Maybe our Greek or our Latin can help us out? Well, the Greek invocation *Kyrie eleison* [O Lord, have mercy!] is listed in serious dictionaries of the English language, but we have devoted the corresponding adjective, Cyrillic, to the Slavic alphabet. The Late Latin adjective *Dominicus* is formed from *Dominus* [The Lord], and the Medieval Latin derivative *dominicalis* has found its way into the English dictionaries as “dominical”—but its usage is confined to ecclesiastical contexts.

The choice of “Sublime” to represent *Rabbānī* may not be the perfect solution, but it does proclaim attributes “pertaining to the Lord,” for He is surely Noble, Majestic, Awe-inspiring through His Grandeur and Beauty, and Exalted is He!

O Lord, open our minds, open our hearts, and open our innermost beings! O Lord, open the gates of Your mercy to all sincere readers of *The Sublime Revelation*! Āmīn.

Muhtar Holland

The
Sublime Revelation
[Al-Faḥḥ ar-Rabbānī]

A COLLECTION OF SIXTY-TWO DISCOURSES

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*Whatever mercy Allāh opens for mankind,
none can withhold it. (Qur'ān 35:2)*

Genealogy of Shaikh Muḥyi'd-dīn

He is Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir ibn [son of] Abī Ṣāliḥ Mūsā ibn 'Abdullāh al-Jīlī ibn Yaḥyā az-Zāhid ibn Muḥammad ibn Dā'ūd ibn Mūsā ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Mūsā ibn 'Abdullāh al-Maḥḍ ibn al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. May Allāh (Exalted is He) be well pleased with them all.

Author's Prologue

In the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful and Compassionate!

O Allāh! O You who know my inability to extoll You, I beseech You—for the sake of the most perfect of Your extollers, to whom You revealed the realities of Your Names and Your Attributes, and the subtleties of the emanations of Your Essence, so that he came to know You in a manner befitting Your perfections, and whom You thereupon inspired with Your praises as You inspired none other than him, as You will inspire him many times over on the day of the manifestation of his unique character [*fardāniyya*], wherein is consummated the manifestation of his manifest character [*maḡhariyya*—to bestow upon him, upon his most precious being, a blessing and a salutation befitting Your most Holy perfection, and, with the noble blessings and peace You confer upon him, to encompass all spheres of his sensory being and his spiritual being, as well as the realms of creation and Divine Command pertaining to each, so that, O our Lord, You leave out none of Your Prophets, Your Messengers, Your Angels, and Your righteous servants, but include them all within the compass of that tremendous grace.

First Discourse

These words were spoken by our Master, Shaikh Muḥyi'd-dīn Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir (may Allāh be well pleased with him) in the guesthouse [*ribāṭ*], in the early morning of Sunday, 3rd of Shawwāl, A.H. 545:

To remonstrate with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) when the divine decrees descend from on high, is the death of religion [*dīn*], the death of the affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*], the death of absolute trust [*tawakkul*] and of sincerity [*ikhlās*]. The heart of the believer knows not “why?” and “how?” it does not know; it simply says: “Yes indeed!” The self [*nafs*] in its entirety is contumacious and contentious, so anyone who wishes to correct it must struggle with it until he is safe from its mischief. The whole of it is evil within evil, but when it has been fought and has come to be at peace, it is wholly transformed into good within good. It becomes compliant with all it is required to obey, and with the abandonment of all sinful disobedience, so now it will be told:

O soul at peace, return unto your Lord, well pleased, well pleasing!
(89:27,28)

It experiences a rightful yearning, as its evil departs from it and it loses all attachment to created things, proving its descent from our father Abraham (peace be upon him), for he forsook his own self and remained unaffected by passion, his heart quite calm. All kinds of created beings came to him and offered to put themselves at his disposal, but he would say: “I do not want your assistance. His knowledge of my condition is enough for me without my asking!” Because his submission and trust were genuine, the fire was told: “Be coolness and safety for Abraham!” (21:63). For one who is patient with Him, the help of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in this world is without reckoning, and His blessings

in the hereafter are without reckoning. As Allāh (Exalted is He) has said:

Surely the patient will be paid their wages in full without reckoning.
(39:10)

Nothing is hidden from Allāh, especially not the burdens borne by those who suffer for His sake. Be patient with Him for an hour and you will see His grace and favor for years. Courage is an hour's patience.

Surely Allāh is with those who are patient. (2:153)

He gives them succor and success. Be patient with Him. Wake up to Him, do not be unaware of Him, and do not leave your awakening till after death, for it will not profit you to wake up at that moment. Wake up to Him before the meeting with Him. Wake up before you awaken involuntarily, and then feel remorse at a time when remorse will not avail you. Improve your hearts, for when they are improved you will experience improvement in all your circumstances. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

In the son of Adam there is a morsel of flesh; when it is in good order, the rest of his body will match its fitness, and when it is unsound, the rest of his body will match its unsoundness. This, of course, is the heart.

The fitness of the heart is maintained through pious devotion, absolute trust in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), the affirmation of His Oneness, and sincerity in practice, while its unsoundness is due to the absence of all this. The heart is a bird in the cage of the physical body, like a pearl in a casket, like money in a safe, so value must be attached to the bird and not to the cage, to the pearl and not to the casket, to the money and not to the safe.

O Allāh! Employ our limbs and organs in Your obedient service, and our hearts in Your intimate knowledge. Employ us throughout our lives, by night and by day. Join us with our predecessors among the righteous. Provide us with sustenance as You provided them with sustenance, and be for us as You were for them. Āmīn.

O my people! Be for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) as the righteous ones have been for Him, so that He may be for you as He has been for them. If you want the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) to be for you, devote yourselves to His obedient service, to

patience with Him, and to willing acceptance of His workings in you and in others. The people [of righteousness] have renounced this world, received their allotted shares thereof with the hand of piety and cautious reserve, then sought the hereafter and performed its works. They have disobeyed their own selves and obeyed their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). They have admonished their own selves, then admonished the selves of others.

O young man! Admonish your own self first, and then admonish the self of another. Attend to the business of your own self. Do not turn your attention to anyone else, as long as you have anything left that still needs to be corrected. Woe unto you! Do you know how to save someone else? You are blind, so how can you lead another? It takes a person endowed with eyesight to lead people, and an expert swimmer to save them from the ocean. Only someone who knows Him well can bring people back to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). As for someone who is ignorant of Him, how could he show the way to Him?

You have no say in the conduct of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must love Him and work for Him, not for anyone other than Him, and of Him and no other you must be afraid. This must be in the heart, not in the wagging of the tongue. This must be in private, not in public. When there is affirmation of Oneness at the door of the house, and idolatry inside the house, this is sheer hypocrisy. Woe unto you! Your tongue is pure while your heart is depraved! Your tongue gives thanks while your heart protests! As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

O son of Adam, My goodness is descending toward you, while idolatry is ascending toward Me! [*Ḥadīth Qudsī*]

Woe unto you! You pretend to be His servant while you obey others apart from Him. If you were His servant in reality, you would disobey them and follow Him. The fully convinced believer does not obey his own self, his devil and his passions. He does not even acknowledge Satan, that he should obey him. He does not concern himself with this world, that he should be subjected to it, but rather spurns it and seeks the hereafter. If it comes his way, he therefore renounces it and cleaves to His Master (Almighty and Glorious is He), dedicating his worshipful

service to Him alone at all times, heeding His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

And they have been commanded only to serve Allāh, making the religion His sincerely, as men of pure faith. (98:5)

Desist from idolizing creatures [*khalq*] and affirm the Oneness of the Lord of Truth [*Ḥaqq*] (Almighty and Glorious is He), for He is the Creator [*Khāliq*] of all things whatsoever, and in His hand are all things whatsoever. O seeker of things from others, you must be out of your mind! Is there anything that is not within the storerooms of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And naught there is, but with Us are the stores thereof. (15:21)

O young man! Sleep beneath the roof gutter of destiny, using patience as a pillow, girding yourself with willing compliance, serving in expectation of happy relief. For if you behave like this, He who determines destiny will shower you with His grace and favor beyond what you are capable of seeking or desiring.

O my people! Conform to the divine power [*qadr*], and take instruction from the Servant of the All-Powerful [*ʿAbd al-Qādir*], the expert [*mujtahid*] in conformity with the divine power. My conformity with the divine power leads me forward to the All-Powerful.

O my people! Come, let us humbly submit to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and to His power and His action. Let us bow our heads low, both outwardly and inwardly, as we comply with the decree and walk in the footsteps of him who is the Messenger of the King, and whom we honor for the sake of the One who sent him. For if we do this with him, he will transport us in his company to the All-Powerful.

There, protection belongs only to Allāh, the True. (18:44)

He will delight you with drink from the ocean of His knowledge, with food from the spread cloth of His favor, with companionship in His intimacy and shelter in His mercy. This is for only a few individuals, one in a thousand out of all the clans and tribes.

O young man! You must observe your religious duty. You must observe the rules of the sacred law, and practice opposition to the self,

the passions, the devil and bad companions. In doing battle [*jihād*] with these, the believer always keeps his helmet on his head, his sword is never sheathed, and his horse's back is never bare of the pommel of its saddle. He sleeps like the people of the Lord, only when sleep is irresistible. Their food is meager fare. They talk when absolutely necessary, but silence is their habit. Only their Lord's power will make them speak; it is the action of Allāh that causes them to speak, that sets their faculty of speech in motion in this world, as it will make limbs and organs speak in time to come, on the Day of Resurrection. It is Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) who makes them speak, He who causes the speaking of every being endowed with speech. He makes them speak as He may cause inanimate matter to speak. He equips them with the means by which to speak, so speak they do. When He wishes them to carry out some purpose, He makes them ready for it. He wished to convey both warning and good tidings to His creatures, that they might bear the burden of proof, so He caused the Prophets and Messengers to speak. Then when He had taken these back unto Himself, He appointed scholars who put their learning into practice, making them speak in their turn about things of benefit to people. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said: "The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets."

O my people! Give thanks to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for His blessings, and recognize them as being from Him, for He has said:

Whatever blessing you have, it is from Allāh. (16:53)

Where is your gratitude, O you who enjoy His blessings, O you who see His blessings as coming from others? Sometimes you see a blessing as being from another. Sometimes you set little store by it, and wait expectantly for something you have not received. Sometimes you make use of it in order to sin against Him.

O young man! In your solitude you need piety to extricate you from sins and mistakes, and vigilance to remind you that the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is watching you. You are in need and in want of having this with you in your solitude. Then you need to make war on the self, the passions and the devil. The ruination of the majority of people is through mistakes. The ruination of the ascetics is through carnal desires. The ruination of the *Abdāl* [spiritual deputies] is through

thoughts and notions entertained in private. The ruination of the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*] lies in the blinking of an eye; their business is the safeguarding of their hearts [*qulūb*], because they are falling asleep at the King's door. They hold the office of convocation; they summon people to intimate knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), never ceasing to call out to their hearts: "O hearts! O spirits [*arwāh*]! O mankind and O jinn! O seekers of the King! Come now to the King's door! Run toward it with the feet of your hearts, with the feet of your devotion and your affirmation of Oneness, your inner knowledge, your eminent piety, and renunciation of this world and the hereafter and all that is apart from the Master." This is the business of the Lord's own people. Their concern is the improvement of creatures. Their aspirations encompass heaven and earth, from the Throne above to the ground below.

O young man! Have done with the self and the passions! Be earth beneath the feet of these people of the Lord, be dust in their hands! The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) brings forth the living from the dead, and He takes out the dead from the living. He brought forth Abraham (peace be upon him) from his parents who were dead through unbelief. The believer is alive, while the unbeliever is dead. The affirmer of Oneness is alive, while the polytheist is dead. This is why Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in one of His revealed utterances: "The first of My creatures to die was Iblīs," meaning: "He rebelled against Me and so died through his sinful rebellion."

These are the latter days. The market of hypocrisy has now come on the scene, the market of falsehood. Do not sit in the company of hypocrites, liars, charlatans. Alas for you, your own self is hypocritical, lying, unbelieving, dissolute, idolatrous, so how can you sit together with it? Oppose it and do not comply with it. Tie it up and do not let it go free. Keep it imprisoned and accord it only its inevitable due. Tame it through efforts of struggle.

As for the passions, control them and do not allow them to gain control of you. And as for natural temperament, you should not go along with it, because it is just a little child with no intelligence. How are you to learn and take instruction from a little child? And as for Satan, he is your enemy and the enemy of your father Adam (peace be

upon him). How can you rely on him and take instruction from him, when between you and him there is a blood-feud and an ancient enmity? You cannot feel safe from him, because he is the murderer of your father and your mother, so if he gets you in his power he will kill you as surely as he killed both of them.

Take pious devotion as your weapon, and let your troops be affirmation of the Oneness of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), vigilance for His sake, abstinence in periods of seclusion, honesty, and seeking the help of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). This weapon, these troops are what will put him to flight, crush him and smash his army. How can you fail to vanquish him, when the Lord of Truth is with you?

O young man! Combine this world with the hereafter, and put them in one place. Then be alone with your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He), naked as far as your heart is concerned, with neither this world nor the hereafter. Do not approach Him unless stripped bare of all that is apart from Him. Do not bind yourself to creatures instead of the Creator. Sever these connections and repudiate these masters. Then, when you have gained control, let this world be for your self, the hereafter for your heart, and the Master for your secret being [*sirr*].

O young man! Do not be caught up with the self, nor with the passions, nor with this world, nor with the hereafter. Do not go off in pursuit of anything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), when you have alighted upon the treasure that will never be exhausted. Then you will receive guidance from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), after which there will be no going astray.

Turn from your sins, and walk quickly away from them toward your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you repent, let it be both your outer and your inner that repent. Repentance is a coup d'état. Divest yourself of sinfulness through sincere repentance and a sense of shame before Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)—in reality, not as a figure of speech. This is one of the actions to be performed by the heart, after the purification of physical limbs and organs through the actions prescribed by the sacred law. The outer vessel [*qālab*] has its work, and the heart [*qalb*] has its work. When the heart has experienced the desert wastes of dependency and attachment to created beings, it

embarks upon the ocean of absolute trust [*tawakkul*], of familiarity [*ma'rifa*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and knowledge [*ilm*] of Him, of forsaking the effect and seeking the Cause. Then, having come to be in the midst of this ocean, it is here that it says:

Who created me, and it is He who guides me. (26:78)

Thus it is guided from shore to shore, from place to place, until it stands on the straight thoroughfare. Whenever it remembers its Lord, its thoroughfare becomes apparent, with the overgrowth cleared away. The heart of the seeker of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) traverses the distances and leaves everything far behind. If it should be assailed along the way by fear of destruction, its faith will emerge to give it courage, thereby extinguishing the fires of loneliness and dread, and bringing in their stead the light of companionship and the joy of feeling close.

O young man! When sickness comes your way, receive it with the hand of patience, and stay calm until the remedy arrives. Then, when the remedy does come, receive it with the hand of gratitude. If you behave like this, you will cope with this present life. The fear of hellfire seriously affects the livers of the believers, turns their faces pale, and makes their hearts sad. When this has them firmly in its grip, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) floods their hearts with the water of His mercy and His grace, and He opens unto them the door of the hereafter so that they see a place of safety there. Then, when they have calmed down, eased their feelings, and rested for a little while, He opens unto them the door of Majesty [*jalāl*]. This upsets their hearts and inner feelings, and their fear becomes much greater and more intense than it was before. When they have experienced this fully, He opens unto them the door of Beauty [*jamāl*], so they calm down, feel tranquil, become conscious, and advance to various degrees, i.e., progressive levels.

O young man! Your interest should not be what you are going to eat and drink, what you will wear, whom you will marry, where you will live and what you will accumulate. All of this is self-interest and ambition. So where is the interest of the heart and the innermost being, which is the quest for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Your interest is what is important to you, so let your interest be your Lord

(Almighty and Glorious is He) and that which is His. This world has a recompense, namely the hereafter, and the creation has a recompense, namely the Creator (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whenever you give up something belonging to this transitory life, He creates its equivalent and better in the life to come.

Reckon that all you have left of your life is today and no more. Make ready for the hereafter. Go to meet the arrival of the angel of death. This world is mere froth to the people of the Lord, while the hereafter is to them a pleasant abode. Then when jealousy comes from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), it separates them therefrom, and creation is made equivalent to the hereafter, for they need neither this world nor the hereafter.

O liar! You love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in a state of good fortune, but when misfortune comes you run away, as if Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) were not your beloved. The servant shows his true character only when put to the test. If afflictions come from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and you are constant, then you are indeed a lover. But if you change, the falsehood is revealed, and the one-time lover has disappeared and gone.

A man once came to the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and said: "O Messenger of Allāh, I love you!" So he replied: "Prepare to dress for poverty!"

Another man came to the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and said: "I love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)!" So he replied: "Get dressed for misfortune!"

Love of Allāh and love of His Messenger are linked to poverty and misfortune. This is why some of the righteous have said: "Misfortune is assigned to friendship, lest it be merely pretended." If it were not so, everyone would claim to love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so He has made constancy in the face of misfortune and poverty an indication of such love.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Second Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse [*madrasa*], on the 5th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

You are turned aside [from the path] by your indifference toward Allāh and your remoteness from Him, so come away from your indifference before you are beaten, humiliated and overpowered by the snakes and scorpions of affliction. Whenever you taste the flavor of misfortune, you will surely be caught unawares. Take no delight in all that you now have around you, for these things must pass away very soon. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Until, even as they were rejoicing in what they had been given, We seized them unawares. (6:44)

What is in the keeping of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) can only be obtained through patience. This is why Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has commanded patience so emphatically. Poverty and patience do not go hand in hand except in the case of the believer [*mu'min*]. Lovers [*muḥibbūn*] are put to the test, so they are patient and feel inspired [*yulhamūn*] to do good works even while they undergo their test. They endure with patience as their suffering is renewed by their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Were it not for patience, you would not see me in your midst. I have been set as a net to catch birds. All through the night my eyes are kept open and my legs are untied, while by day I keep my eyes closed and my legs are bound in the net. This is done for your benefit, unbeknown to you.

Were it not for compliance with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), would any man in his right mind settle in this city and associate with its inhabitants, when it is rife with pretense, hypocrisy [*nifāq*] and wrongdoing, with much that is dubious and unlawful [*ḥarām*]. There is so much ingratitude for the blessings of the Lord of

Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and exploitation of them for corrupt and immoral ends. There is many a disabled person in his home, and pious man in his shop. The heretic [*ẓindīq*] is likely to be in his wine, the champion of truth [*ṣiddīq*] in his pulpit.

Were it not for the penalty, I would talk about what goes on inside your houses. But I have a foundation that needs to be built. I have children who need an education. If I did reveal a bit of what is on my mind, it would have the effect of setting us apart. In this situation I am in, I need the strength of the Prophets [*nabiyyīn*] and Messengers [*mursalīn*]. I need the patience of those who have gone before, from Adam to my own time. I need Lordly strength [*quwwa rabbāniyya*].

O Allāh, [grant] grace, and help, and good pleasure! Āmīn.

O young man! You have not been created to live here and enjoy this world forever, so change those ways of yours that are so hateful to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You suppose that to obey Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) you have only to say: “There is none worthy of worship but Allāh. Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh” [*Lā ilāha illa’ llāh—Muḥammadun rasūlu’ llāh*]. But this will do you no good unless you add something else to it. Faith [*īmān*], word [*qawl*] and deed [*‘amal*], will not be accepted of you and will not profit you, if you commit sins [*ma’āṣī*] and lapses [*ẓallāt*] and go against the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and if you do this persistently, while ceasing to practice the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], fasting [*ṣawm*], charity [*ṣadaqa*] and good works [*af’āl al-khair*]. What benefit will you then derive from the twofold declaration of faith [*ash-shahādātān*]?

When you say, “There is none worthy of worship but Allāh,” you are making a claim, so you will be asked if you have any proof. What constitutes proof? Obedience to the Lord’s commandment, avoidance of what He has forbidden, patient endurance of misfortunes, and submission to His decree—these are the proof of this claim. But even if you perform these actions, they will not be accepted of you without sincerity [*ikhhlās*] and conformity to the exemplary practice [*sunna*] (of the Prophet).

Comfort the poor with something from your possessions. Do not turn away a beggar [*sā’il*], when you are capable of giving him something, be

it little or much. Concur with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in His love of giving, and be grateful to Him for how He has equipped you and enabled you to give. Woe unto you! The beggar is the gift of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and you are capable of giving to him, so how can you send the gift back to its Giver? In my presence you listen and shed tears, but when the poor person comes along, your heart turns hard. This goes to show that your tears and your attention were not sincerely for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Paying attention to me is first with the inner being [*sirr*], then with the heart [*qalb*], then with the limbs and organs [*jawāriḥ*—in doing good. When you enter my presence, do so having set aside your knowledge, your work, your speech, your lineage and your noble descent, as well as forgetting your money and your family. Stand before me with your heart naked of everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), until He clothes it with His nearness, His grace and His favors. If you act like this on entering my presence, you will come to be like the birds that go out in the morning hungry and return in the evening satisfied.

The light of the heart is from the light of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said:

Beware of the penetrating insight [*firāsa*] of the believer, [*mu' min*] for he sees by the light of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O transgressor [*fāsiq*], beware of the believer, and do not enter his presence while you are stained with the pollution of your sins, for he will see by the light of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) what condition you are in. He will see your idolatry [*shirk*] and your hypocrisy [*nifāq*]. He will see your evil deed tucked away beneath your clothing. He will see your shameful behavior and your disgraceful conduct. He who does not see a successful person will not succeed. You are crazy, and you belong among crazy folk.

(Someone asked, “Till when this blindness?” So he replied:)

Until you rush to the Physician, and lay your head to rest on His doorstep. Till you think well of Him and banish suspicion of Him from your heart. Till you take your children and sit at His gate. Till you

patiently suffer the bitterness of His medicine. Only then will the blindness depart from your eyes. Humbly submit to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and set your needs down before Him. Do not credit yourself with any good deed, but dismiss it as a failure. Lock the doors of creatures, and open the door between you and Him. Acknowledge your sins, and apologize to Him for your shortcomings. Be convinced that there is no cause of harm, no benefactor, no giver and no withholder apart from Him. Only then will the blindness depart from the eye of your heart, and sight and insight will be set in motion.

O young man! This business [*sha'n*] is not about the coarseness of your clothing and your diet. It concerns the abstinence [*zuhd*] of your heart. When the genuine aspirant [*aṣ-ṣādiq*] takes to wearing rough wool [*ṣūf*], he first clothes his inner [*bāṭin*], then proceeds to his outer [*ẓāhir*]. Thus he clothes his innermost being [*sirr*], then his heart [*qalb*], then his personal self [*nafs*], then his physical limbs and organs [*jawāriḥ*], until, when the whole of him has become roughened, along comes the hand of compassion, mercy and grace. It transforms the condition of the person so afflicted, by divesting him of the dark attire of mourning and re-clothing him in the garb of happiness, converting misfortune into blessings, detestation into delight, fear into security, distance into closeness, and poverty into wealth.

O young man! Accept the allotments of destiny [*al-aqsām*] with the hand of abstinence, not with the hand of desire [*raghba*]. He who eats and weeps is not like one who eats and laughs. Consume the allotted shares while your heart is with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for you will then be safe from their bad effects. It is better for you to eat from the hand of the Physician, than to eat something on your own, not knowing where it may have come from.

How hard are your hearts! Fidelity [*al-imāna*] is gone from amongst you. Compassion is gone from your midst. You should be faithful to the rules of the sacred law [*aḥkām ash-sharʿ*], but you have abandoned them and been disloyal to them. Woe unto you! If you do not make a practice of fidelity, the water will soon be up to your eyes, while the cord is tied around your hands and your legs. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will lock the door of His mercy against you, He will fill the hearts of His creatures with harshness toward you, and He will prevent them from giving to you.

Mind your heads with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Beware of Him, for His grasp is excruciatingly painful, snatching you from your place of safety, from your good health, from your high spirits, from your fun and games. Watch out for Him, for He is the God [*ilāh*] of heaven of the God of the earth. Take care of His blessings by giving thanks. Respond to His command and His prohibition by heeding and obeying. Respond to hardship with patience, and to ease with thanks. Such was the practice of your predecessors, the Prophets [*nabiyyūn*], the Messengers [*mursalūn*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], who were ever grateful for blessings and patient in suffering misfortunes.

Get up and leave the tables of rebellion against Him, and eat from the tables of obedience toward Him. Keep within His guidelines [*ḥudūd*] when ease comes your way, and be thankful to Him. When hardship comes your way, repent of your sins, and be self-critical, for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is not a cruel tyrant to His slaves [*‘abīd*]. Be mindful of death and what lies beyond it. Remember the Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), His reckoning, and the fact that He is watching you. Wake up! Till when this sleep? Till when this ignorance and dallying with vanities, this attachment to the self [*nafs*], desire [*hawā*] and habit [*‘āda*]? Why do you not make a practice of worshipful service [*‘ibāda*] to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and obedience to His sacred law? *‘Ibāda* [worshipful service] means giving up *‘āda* [familiar habit]. Why do you not cultivate the good practices recommended by the Qur’ān [*ādāb al-Qur’ān*] and the words of the Prophet? [*kalām an-nubuwwa*: lit., the speech of Prophecy].

O young man! Do not associate with people in blindness, in ignorance, in negligence and sleep. Relate to them with insight, knowledge and alertness. When you see them behaving in a way you can approve, then go along with it, but when you see their behavior as harmful to you, you must avoid it and get them to give it up. You are all in a state of total indifference toward the Lord of Truth (Glorified and Exalted is He). You must wake up to Him. You must frequent the mosques [*masājīd*] and pronounce many benedictions on the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), for he has said:

If a fire came down from the sky, no one would escape from it except the people of the mosques.

If you are lazy in performing the ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], your prayer will be disconnected by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said:

The closest a servant can be to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself [*sājid*] [in the *ṣalāt*-prayer].

Woe unto you! You spend so much time seeking convenient interpretations and special concessions. The *muta'awwil* [one who seeks interpretations to suit his own convenience] is deceitful. If only we would make a firm commitment, stick to the consensus [*ijmā'*], and be sincere in our actions, we would then be safe from [incurring the displeasure of] the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). So how is it when we look for convenient interpretations and special concessions? Firm commitment [*ʿazīma*] is gone, and gone are its practitioners. This is the age of compromises [*rukhaṣ*], not the age of commitments. This is the age of pretense [*riyā'*], of hypocrisy [*nifāq*], and of the unjustified usurpation of property. Many are those who perform the prayers, keep the fast, go on pilgrimage, pay the alms-due, and do good works—for the sake of creatures [*khalq*], not of the Creator [*khāliq*]. For the majority in this world have become creatures in a creation without a Creator.

You are all dead at heart [*mawtā'l-qulūb*], alive to the lower self and the passions [*aḥyā'u'n-nufūs wa'l-ahwiyā*], seeking only this world. The life of the heart requires separation from creatures [*al-khalq*] and residence with the Lord of Truth [*al-Ḥaqq*] (Almighty and Glorious is He)—in the spiritual sense [*min ḥaithu'l-ma'nā*], because the outer form [*ṣūra*] is irrelevant at this stage. The life of the heart requires obedience to the commandment of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), avoidance of His prohibition, and patience with Him through His trials, His judgments and His decrees.

O young man! Submit to Him in what is decreed by Him, then stay with Him after that. This business [*amr*] needs a foundation, then a superstructure, and constant maintenance at every moment of night and day. Woe unto you! You must ponder over your business. Pondering is a matter for the heart. So when you see yourself as having done something good, give thanks to Allāh (Exalted is He), and when you see yourself as having done something bad, repent of it through this

pondering. Thus your religion [*dīn*] will live, and your devil [*shaitān*] will die. This is why it has been said that an hour of pondering [*tafakkur*] is better than a whole night's vigil.

O Community of Muḥammad! Give thanks to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for He is content with a small amount of work from you, in relation to work from your predecessors. You are the latecomers, but you will come first on the Day of Resurrection. When one of you is all he should be, none is so complete. You are the leaders [*umara'*], while the members of other communities are the common herd [*ra'iyya*]. As long as you remain a resident in the house of your own self [*nafs*], your desire [*hawā*] and your ordinary nature [*ṭab'*], you are not all you should be. As long as you keep struggling with people for what they have in their possession, trying to win it with your pretense and your hypocrisy, you have no proper fitness. As long as you continue to be greedy for this world, you have no proper fitness. As long as you continue to rely in your heart on anything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), you have no proper fitness. O Allāh, bless us with true fitness in Your company, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Third Discourse

It was in the well-attended schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 8th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O you who are poor [*faqīr*], do not wish for affluence, for it may be the cause of your destruction. And you who are sick, do not wish for good health, for it may be the cause of your destruction. Be sensible. Take care of your profit [*thamar*], and your business [*amr*] will be recommended. Be satisfied with your present lot, and do not ask for more in addition to it. Whatever the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) may give you in response to your request, it will be nothing but trouble and unpleasantness—I know this from experience—unless the servant is inwardly commanded to make the request. When he has been so commanded to ask, he will be blessed in what he asks for, and impurities will be removed from it.

Let your asking be mostly for pardon [*ʿafw*], well-being [*ʿāfiya*] and lasting immunity [*muʿāfāh*] in this world and the hereafter. Be satisfied with this and no more. Do not adopt an attitude of superiority and arrogance toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for he will break you. Do not show off to Allāh and His creatures with an arrogant display of your youthful vigor, your strength and your possessions, for He will knock you down. He will chastise you as only He can chastise; and His chastisement is excruciatingly painful.

Woe unto you! Your tongue is Muslim, but not so your heart [*qalb*]. Your words are Muslim, but not so your deeds [*ʿiʿl*]. In public you are a Muslim, but not so in private. Do you not realize that if, when you pray and fast and perform all the acts of charity, you do not intend these deeds to be for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you are a hypocrite [*munāfiq*], far away from Allāh (Almighty and

Glorious is He)? Turn back now to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), repenting all your unworthy deeds and words and intentions.

In the actions of the people [of the Lord] there is no fawning insincerity [*malaq*]. They are the successful ones. They are truly convinced [*mūqinūn*], sincerely affirming the Divine Unity [*muwahhidūn mukhlisūn*], patient [*ṣābirūn*] in suffering the trials and afflictions of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), grateful [*shākirūn*] for His blessings and His gracious favors. They remember him with their tongues, then in their hearts [*qulūb*], then in their innermost beings [*asrār*]. When they receive bad treatment from people, they smile in their faces. The rulers of this world have no standing in their eyes. From their point of view, all on this earth are dead, weak, sick, impoverished [*mawtā, 'ajzā, marḍā, fuqarā*]. As far as they are concerned, Paradise seems like a wasteland. Where they are concerned, the fire [of Hell] is extinguished. [Where they are concerned,] there is no earth, no heaven, nor anyone dwelling in either of the two. Their directions unite to become one single direction. They used to be with this world and its people, then they came to be with the hereafter and its people, then they came to be with the Lord of this world and the hereafter. They joined company with Him and with those who love Him. They traveled with Him in their hearts until they reached Him, and they attained the Companion [*rafiq*] before the Way [*ṭarīq*]. They opened the door between them and Him. He remembers them. They never stop remembering Him, so that remembrance eventually relieves them of their burdens. To others they are lost, and with Him they are found. They have heeded His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

So remember Me, and I will remember you. Be thankful to Me, and be not ungrateful toward Me. (2:152)

So practice remembrance [*dhikr*] of Him, aspiring to His remembrance of you. Heed the words He spoke in one of His utterances:

I am the boon companion [*jalīs*] of one who remembers Me.

They kept away, therefore, from popular meeting-places [*majālis al-khalq*], and concentrated on remembrance in order to receive His companionship [*mujālasa*].

O my people, do not let your minds become giddy and perplexed! This knowledge is useless to you without practice. You need to put this

black-on-white text into practice, for it is the law of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must work at it day after day, and year after year, until its fruit drops into your hands.

O young man! Your knowledge is calling out to you: "I am evidence for the case against you if you fail to put me into practice, but I am evidence in your favor if you do put me into practice!" As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported to have said:

Knowledge cries out for action. If it gets a positive response, [well and good], but if not, it takes its leave.

Its blessings depart and its trials remain. Away goes its intercession on your behalf with its Master, and finished is its involvement in meeting your needs. It has taken its leave because all that remains is an empty shell, since the inner core [*lubb*] of knowledge [*ʿilm*] is action [*ʿamal*]. You are not genuinely following the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) unless you are putting his words into practice. When you do behave in accordance with his instructions to you, he approaches your heart [*qalb*] and your innermost being [*sirr*] and introduces them both to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Your knowledge is calling out to you, but you do not hear it, because you have no heart. Listen to it with the ear of your heart and your innermost being, and accept what it has to say, because you will find it to your benefit. Knowledge together with action will bring you close to the Knower [*ʿĀlim*] who sends down knowledge from above. If you act in accordance with this wisdom, which is the primary knowledge, the fountain of secondary knowledge will also gush forth upon you. You will then have two fountains flowing. Your heart will be filled with wisdom and knowledge, both exoteric [*ẓāhir*] and esoteric [*bāṭin*]. Then you will be obliged to pay the alms-due [*zakāt*] on this, by using it to comfort the brethren [*ikhwān*] and the seekers [*murīdūn*]. The alms-due on knowledge is the dissemination of it, and inviting people to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O young man! He who has the patience has the potential [*man ṣabara qadara*]. As Allāh (Exalted is He) has said:

Those who patiently persevere [*aṣ-ṣābirūn*] will truly receive a reward without measure. (39:10)

Support yourself by means of your earned income; do not use your religion for that purpose. Earn your income, use it to meet your own needs, and share some of it with others. The personal acquisitions of ordinary believers [*mu'minūn*], are the shared dishes of the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*]. Their businesses or professions yield prosperity only in relation to the poor [*fuqarā'*] and the needy [*masākīn*]. They wish to transmit compassion to the people, thereby seeking the good pleasure [*riḍā*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His love for them. They have heeded the words of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

Human beings are the dependents of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and the people dearest to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) are those among them who are most beneficial to His dependents.

In relation to ordinary people, the friends of Allāh [*awliyā' ullāh*] are deaf, dumb and blind [*ṣummun bukmun 'umyun*]. Since their hearts are near to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), they listen to no one but Him and they see no one but Him. Nearness [*qurb*] gives them refuge, reverence [*haiba*] gives them cover, and love gives them benefits in the presence of their Beloved. For they are between the Majesty [*jalāl*] and the Beauty [*jamāl*] (of the Lord), inclining neither to the right nor to the left. They have a “forwards” [*amām*] without a “backwards” [*warā'*]. They are waited upon by humankind, by jinn, by angels and by all manner of creatures. They are served by wisdom and knowledge. They are fed by gracious favor, and their thirst is quenched by friendly kindness. Of the food of His gracious favor do they eat, and of the juice of His friendly kindness they drink. They have better things to do than listen to popular conversation, for they and ordinary people are worlds apart [lit.: they are in one valley, and ordinary people are in another valley]. They order the people to obey the commandments and prohibitions of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), deputizing for the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). They are in fact his heirs.

Their occupation is bringing people back to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), proving His case against them. They put things in their proper places, giving every one the favor he deserves. They do not claim their rights [*ḥuqūq*], and they do not satisfy their selfish desires [*nufūs*] and natural instincts [*ṭibā'*]. They love for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and they hate for the

sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). They are wholly His; none other than He has any share in them. When someone has achieved this completely, Friendship [*ṣuḥba*] is complete for him and he attains salvation and success. He is loved by humankind, by the jinn and the angels, by the earth and by heaven.

O hypocrite [*munāfiq*]! O worshipper of creatures and secondary causes, forgetful of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)! You want all this to drop into your hands, while you are in the state you are in! You have no honor and no dignity. Submit, then repent, then learn and work and be sincere, otherwise you will not be guided aright.

Woe unto you! There is no animosity between me and you; it is just that I speak the truth, and treat you impartially for the sake of the religion [*dīn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). I got my own training in the rough style of speech of the old masters [*mashāyikh*], and in the tough school of exile and poverty. If a statement appears to come from me to you, receive it from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), because it is He who has caused me to utter it.

When you enter my presence, come in naked of *you*, naked of your own self [*nafs*] and your desires [*hawā*]. If you had any power of perception [*baṣīra*], you would see me naked too. Your infirmity, however, is your sickly understanding.

O you who wish to enjoy my friendship and to spend all your time in my company, there is no space in my condition for any creature, no room for anything of this world or the hereafter. So if someone repents at my hands, befriends me, thinks well of me, and acts on what I have to say, then so be it, if such be the will of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The Prophets receive their training from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) through His direct speech [*kalām*], while the saints [*awliyā'*] are trained by Him through His indirect speech [*ḥadīth*]. This indirect speech is an inspiration [*ilhām*] within their hearts, because they are the caretakers [*awṣiyā'*], the deputies [*khulafā'*] and the servants [*ghilmān*] of the Prophets.

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has used direct speech. He spoke to Moses (peace be upon him). It was indeed He who spoke to him, not any created being. It was the Knower of all invisible mysteries [*'Allām al-ghuyūb*] who spoke to him. He spoke to him using a form of speech

he could understand, and which reached his mind directly. He also spoke directly to our Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace). This [speech] is the Qurʾān, the firm life-line of Allāh, which is between you and your Lord (Glorious and Exalted is He). Gabriel (peace be upon him) brought it down to him from heaven. From the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), he brought it down to His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) just as He said and told [it to him]. This may not be denied or negated. O Allāh, guide each and all, relent toward each and all, and have mercy on each and all!

It is related about the Commander of the Believers, [the Caliph] al-Muʿtaṣim-biʿllāh (may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon him) that he said, at the moment when his end was at hand: “I am repenting to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for the way I treated Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, although I was not at all personally involved in his case, and others were actually in charge of that [inquisition].” *

O miserable wretch! Desist from talking about things that bring you no benefit. Give up fanaticism [*taʿaṣṣub*] in matters of doctrine [*madhhab*], and occupy yourself with something that may be useful to you in this world and the hereafter. You will see your report soon enough, and you will remember my words. In the cut and thrust of the fray, with no helmet on your head, you will see what lasting effects wounds can have. Empty your heart of worldly concerns, because you will soon be taken from this world. Do not go seeking a comfortable lifestyle [*ʿaish*] here, for it will not fall into your hand. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The way of life is the way of life of the hereafter [*al-ʿaishu ʿaishuʾl-ākhirā*].

Reduce your expectations, now that you are renouncing worldly pleasures, for abstinence [*zuhd*] is all a matter of reducing expectations. Keep your distance from evil companions. Put an end to the friendship between you and them, and establish a connection between you and righteous folk [*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*]. Avoid a near neighbor if he happens to be one of those bad companions, and get in touch with someone far away if he happens to be one of those who make good friends. Whenever you relate to someone on affectionate terms, a form of kinship will develop between the pair of you, so take a good look at anyone you befriend.

*This refers to the persecution of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who was charged as a criminal, flogged and imprisoned, because of his steadfast refusal to repudiate the traditional belief in the “uncreated” character of the Qurʾān.

When a certain wise man was asked the meaning of kinship [*qarāba*], he said: "Loving friendship [*mawadda*]."

Refrain from seeking what has been assigned to your lot and what has not been assigned to it, because looking for what has already been allotted is a waste of energy, while the quest for the other can only lead to disgust and disappointment. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

One of the many punishments Allāh (Exalted is He) may inflict on His servant is the quest for that which has not been allotted to him.

O young man! Take the handiwork of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) as your signpost to Him. Reflect on the work of art and you may attain to the Artist. The fully convinced and experienced believer [*al-mu'min al-mūqin al-ʿārīf*] possesses two external eyes and two inner eyes. With the external pair of eyes he sees what Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has created on the earth, and with the inner pair he sees what Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has created in the heavens. Then the veils are removed from his heart, so that he sees Him without ambiguity [*tashbih*] and without qualification [*takyīf*], and thus comes to be drawn near [*muqarrab*] and beloved [*maḥbūb*]. From the beloved nothing is kept hidden. The veils are removed only from a heart that is stripped bare of creatures, as well as of the self, of natural inclination, of desire and of the devil. Then the keys to the treasures of the earth are flung from his hand, and the deserts and civilization [*al-ḥajar wa'l-madar*] are all the same to him.

Be sensible! Consider what I am saying and try to understand, for I am speaking about the essence [*lubb*] of the subject, its substance [*jawhar*], its inner content [*bāṭin*], its true significance [*naṣiḥa maʿānīhi*].

O young man! Do not complain about the Creator to creatures; it is rather to Him that you should complain. He is the One who has the power to act, as none but He can.

The treasures of piety [*birr*] include the concealment of secrets [*sirr*], of misfortunes, of illnesses and of charitable giving [*ṣadaqa*]. Give charity with your right hand, and try to make sure that your left hand knows nothing about it. Beware of the sea of this world, for many folk have drowned in it, and only a few individuals have come out of it safe.

It is a deep ocean, which would drown one and all, were it not that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) delivers from it whomever He will among His servants, just as He will deliver the believers from the Fire [*an-nār*] on the Day of Resurrection [*yawm al-qiyāma*]. All must pass through it, and Allāh delivers whomever He will among His servants. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

There is not one of you but shall approach it; that is a fixed decree of your Lord. (19:71)

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say to the Fire: “Be coolness and peace’ (21:69), so that My servants may pass through—those who believe in Me, who are sincerely devoted to Me, who long for Me and who abstain from all that is other than Me.” He will speak to it like this, as He spoke to the fire which Nimrod lit, intending to burn Abraham (peace be upon him) therein.

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say: “O sea of the lower world! O water, do not drown this sought and beloved servant,” so that he will be rescued from it and will find himself on dry ground, just as He delivered Moses (peace be upon him) and his people from that sea. He grants His favor to whomever He will.

Allāh sustains whomever He will without reckoning. (2:212)

All good is in His hand. Giving and withholding are in His hand. Wealth and poverty are in His hand. Honor and disgrace are in His hand. No one has anything to match Him. The sensible person is therefore one who sticks to His door, and turns away from anyone else’s door.

O backslider! I see you pleasing creatures and vexing the Creator. You are ruining your life hereafter to construct your life in this world. Soon you must pay the penalty. You will be chastised by Him whose chastisement is excruciatingly painful. His chastisement takes many forms. He may chastise you with dismissal from your position of authority. He may chastise you with sickness, humiliation and poverty. He may chastise you with overwhelming hardships, sorrows and cares. He may chastise you with subjection to the tongues and hands of other people. He may give all His creatures the upper hand over you.

Wake up, O sleeper! O Allāh, make us alert to You and for Your sake! Āmīn.

O young man! In your approach to this world, do not be like someone who gathers wood by night, not knowing what may fall into his hand. I notice that in your dealings you behave just like such a person, gathering wood on a very dark, moonless night, and taking no light with him. The ground there is sandy, covered with a lot of dense undergrowth. The place is teeming with deadly insects, so one of them could kill you at any moment. You had better do your wood-gathering in the day-time, because the light of the sun will prevent you from picking up something harmful to you. Conduct all your affairs by the sun of the affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*], of the sacred law [*sharʿ*] and of pious devotion [*taqwā*], for this sun will prevent you from falling into the trap of the desires, the self, the devil, and idolatrous creature-worship [*ash-shirk biʿl-khalq*], as well as preventing you from moving along too hastily.

Woe unto you! Do not be too hasty, because someone who is in a hurry will miss the mark, or almost do so, whereas one who takes his time will hit the target, or almost do so (that is to say, he will get close to hitting it.) Haste is from the devil, while steadiness is from the All-Merciful [*al-ʿajal mināʾsh-shaiṭan waʾt-tuʾadā mināʾr-Raḥmān*]. What prompts you to haste is mostly greed for all the world contains. Be content, for contentment [*qanāʿa*] is a treasure that is never all spent. How can you go looking for that which has not been allotted to you, and which will never fall into your hand? Curb your selfish appetite [*nafs*], be satisfied with Him and abstain from everything other than Him. Persist until you become familiar [*ʿarīf*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for then you will become free from all want. Your heart will be confident, your inner being will be pure, and your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) will teach you. This world will seem trivial to the eyes in your head, the hereafter to the eyes of your heart, and everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) to the eyes of your innermost being. You will then be universally respected.

O young man! If you wish that no door would stay shut in your face, then observe your duty to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for that is the key to every door. As Allāh (Exalted is He) has said:

Whoever is dutiful toward Allāh, He prepares a way out for him, and provides for him from sources he could never imagine. (65:2,3)

Do not go against the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), not your own account, not because of your family, and not because of your property or your peers. Are you not ashamed of telling Him to make changes and alterations? Are you wiser than He, more knowledgeable than He, and more compassionate than He? You and all other creatures are His servants; He is in control of you, and He is in control of them. If you wish for His friendly company [*ṣuḥba*] in this world and the hereafter, you must keep calm and quiet and hold your tongue.

The friends [*awliyā'*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) are well behaved in His presence. They do not make a single movement, and do not take a single step, without receiving explicit consent from Him in their inner feelings [*qulūb*]. They neither eat permissible things, nor put on clothes, nor marry, nor deal with any of their worldly affairs, without receiving explicit consent in their inner feelings. They stand at the disposal of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They stand at the disposal of the Mover [*Muqallib*] of hearts and eyes. They take no decision in the presence of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) until He instills it in their hearts in this world, and in their bodies in the hereafter.

O Allāh, bless us with meeting You in this world and the hereafter! Delight us with nearness to You and with the sight of You! Let us be among those who are well pleased with You, to the exclusion of everything apart from You! And:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Fourth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 10th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

When a door to good things is opened up for someone, let him seize the opportunity, because he does not know when it may be shut against him.

O my people! Seize the opportunity and take advantage of the door of life [*bāb al-hayāt*] while it is still open. It will soon be shut against you. Avail yourselves of the opportunity to do good deeds [*af'āl al-khair*] while you are still capable of performing them. Avail yourselves of the door of repentance [*tawba*] and enter it while it is still open to you. Avail yourselves of the door of supplication [*du'ā'*], for it is open to you. Avail yourselves of the door of fellowship with your righteous brethren [*ikhwān ṣāliḥūn*], for it is open to you.

O my people! Rebuild what you have demolished. Cleanse what you have defiled. Restore what you have corrupted. Clarify what you have confused. Give back what you have taken. Return to your Master [*mawlā*] (Almighty and Glorious is He) from your flight and desertion.

O young man! There is nothing here but the Creator (Almighty and Glorious is He), so if you are with the Creator you are His servant, and if you are with His creatures you are their servant. You have nothing to say until you cross the wastelands and the deserts, as far as your heart is concerned, and detach yourself from everything, as far as your innermost being [*sirr*] is concerned. Surely you know that the seeker of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) must leave everything behind? He has become convinced that every created thing is a veil between him and his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He); anything he dwells on becomes an obstacle to him.

O young man! Do not be lazy, because a lazy person will always be deprived and will carry the burden of remorse. Strive for excellence [*jawwid*] in all you do, and the Lord of Truth will treat you excellently [*jāda*] in this world and the hereafter. Abū Muḥammad al-‘Ajamī (may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon him) used to say: “O Allāh, make us ‘*jayyidīn*’!” He meant to say: “O Allāh, make us ‘*jīyād*,’” but [Arabic was not his native language, so] he could not get his tongue around [the proper plural of ‘*jayyid*’ = ‘excellent’].

He who has tasted, knows by experience [*man dhāqa fa-qad ‘arafa*]. It is a good and blessed thing to maintain friendly relations with people and to harmonize with them, provided the rules and the spirit of the sacred law [*shar‘*] are observed in the process, but not if any of these rules are broken and the spirit is not respected. People of honesty and discernment receive indications as to whether acts of worship [*tā‘āt*] are accepted or rejected.

O young man! Set up the trap-net of supplication [*du‘ā’*], and come back to contentment [*riḍā*]. Do not offer prayers with your tongue, while your heart is saying the opposite. On the Day of Resurrection, each person will remember the good and the evil he did in this world, but then it will be useless to regret. Memory will serve no purpose then. The important thing [*ash-sha’n*] is remembering today, before death comes. There is no point in starting to think of plowing and sowing when it is already time to reap the harvest. To quote the words attributed to the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

This world is the planting ground of the hereafter, so those who plant goodness will harvest bliss, while those who plant evil will harvest remorse.

When death comes to you, you will wake up, but at a moment when being awake is useless to you. O Allāh, awaken us from the sleep of those who are neglectful of You, who are ignorant of You! Āmīn.

O young man! Your association with bad characters will get you a nasty reputation with good people. Walk beneath the protective shade of the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the Sunna [exemplary practice] of His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and then you will be successful.

O my people! Feel a genuine sense of shame [*ḥayā’*] before Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not be negligent, letting your time

go to waste. You have been so busy accumulating things you will never use, making plans you will never accomplish, and building places you will never live in. All of this hinders you from access to the station [*maqām*] of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Remembrance [*dhikr*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) sets up camp in the hearts of those who know by experience [*al-‘ārifūn*], encircling them all around and making them forget to remember any other object of remembrance [*madhkūr*]. When this is fully accomplished, Paradise [*al-janna*] is the place of refuge [*ma’wā*]. Paradise is the place of refuge: Paradise paid in cash [*manqūda*], and Paradise promised [*maw‘ūda*]. The one that is paid in cash, here in this world, is cheerful acceptance of the [Lord’s] decree, nearness of the heart to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), its intimate conversation [*munājāt*] with Him, and the removal of the veil between it and Him. The owner of this heart comes to be privately [*fi khalwatihi*] with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in all his states [*aḥwāl*], without qualification [*takyīf*] or ambiguity [*tashbih*].

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (42:11)

The promised Paradise is the one which Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has promised to the believers, together with the vision of His noble countenance, without impediment and with no doubt. All goodness belongs to Allāh, and evil belongs to others apart from Him. Goodness consists in advancing toward Him, and evil in backing away from Him. Whenever you do a good deed for the sake of a return, it is yours, while any good deed you do for the sake of Allāh belongs to Him. When you act and look for the return, your reward will be in the form of something created. When you act for the sake of Allāh (Exalted is He), your reward will be your nearness to Him and the sight of Him, so then you will not not look for the return on any of your deeds at all.

What is this world, what is the hereafter, and what is everything apart from Allāh (Exalted is He) in comparison with Him? Seek the Benefactor [*mun‘im*], not the benefit [*ni‘ma*]. Seek the Neighbor [*jār*], rather than the house [*dār*]. He is the One existing [*al-kā’in*] before all things, the Bringer-into-being [*al-mukawwin*] of all things, and the One still existing after all things.

You must remember death, be patient in suffering misfortunes, and place all your trust in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances. If you have perfected these three virtues, your piety will be all it should be when the angel comes to you with the reminder of death. Through patience [*ṣabr*] you will gain what you wish from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Through absolute trust [*tawakkul*] you will rid your heart of things, and become attached to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). This world will move away from you, as will the hereafter and all that is apart from the Master [*al-Mawlā*]. Comfort [*rāḥa*] will come to you from all sides, and protection and shelter from every quarter. Your Master will keep you safe in all six directions [before, behind, right, left, above, and below]. Not one single creature will be left with any way of getting at you. All approaches to you will be blocked, and all entrances closed. You will join the company of those concerning whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

As for My servants, you shall have no power over them. (15:42)

How could anyone have power [*sulṭān*] over those who sincerely affirm the Divine Unity [*al-muwahhidūn al-mukhlisūn*], whose actions are not designed to impress people with a hypocritical show? Speech [*nuṭq*] comes at the end, not at the beginning. The beginning is all dumbness, and the end is all speech. The kingdom of the sincere person [*al-mukhlis*] is in his heart, and his power is in his innermost being, without regard for the outer. Rare are those who combine the inner and the outer.

Always be inconspicuous about your condition, and stay that way until your development is complete, and your heart attains to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you have achieved completion and maturity, then you need not care. Why should you care, once your state [*ḥāl*] has been confirmed, you have been established in your rank [*maqām*], your guards have been posted around you, and people are now to you like pillars and trees. You are equally indifferent to their praise and their blame, their approach and their withdrawal. You become their builder and their demolisher. You deal with them freely by permission of their Creator. He gives you the power to release and to

bind, and leaves the execution to the hand of your heart, and the signal to the hand of your innermost being.

There is nothing to be said until this is all in good order. If it is not yet so, be sensible. Do not get foolishly carried away. You are blind, so try and find someone to guide you. You are ignorant, so try and find someone to teach you. Then when you come across him, hold on to him tight, accept his words and his views, and take him as your guide to the highroad. Once you have reached it, stay there until you get to know it really well, for then everyone who has lost his way will seek refuge with you, and you will become a food-station [*tabaq*: lit., “large tray”] for the poor and the needy.

One feature of chivalry [*futuwwa*] is keeping the secret of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and molding one’s behavior [*takhalluq*] with people on a good moral character [*khulq ḥasan*]. Where do you stand in the quest for the Lord of Truth, and in being content with Him to the exclusion of all else? Have you not heard His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

There are some of you who desire this world, and there are some of you who desire the hereafter. (3:152)

In another place He adds:

...desiring His countenance. (18:28)

If your luck [*bakht*] is good, the hand of [divine] jealousy will come and save you from the hand of everyone aart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and it will take you to the gate of nearness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for:

There, protection belongs only to Allāh, the True. (18:44)

When you have achieved this completely, both this world and the hereafter will come to you as servants [*khādimatain*], with no trouble or inconvenience. Knock on the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and stand fast at his door, because if you stay there you will learn to distinguish the various notions [*khawāṭir*] that arise in you: The selfish notion [*khāṭir an-naḥs*]; the notion prompted by passion [*khāṭir al-hawā*]; the notion arising from the heart [*khāṭir al-qalb*]; the diabolical notion [*khāṭir Iblīs*]; and the angelic notion [*khāṭir al-malak*].

You will be told: “This notion is valid [*ḥaqq*], and this one is false [*bāṭil*].” You will learn to recognize each one by its distinguishing characteristic. When you have reached this stage [*maqām*], you will receive a notion from the Lord of Truth [*khāṭir minā’l-Ḥaqq*] (Almighty and Glorious is He), which will train you, stabilize you, make you stand up and make you sit down, set you in motion and bring you to rest, and tell you what you must and must not do.

O my people! Seek neither addition nor subtraction, neither advancement nor postponement, because destiny [*qadar*] has already encompassed each one of you as a separate individual. There is not one of you who does not have a record [*kitāb*] and a time frame [*ta’rīkh*] peculiar to himself. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Your Lord has finished the work of creation [*khalq*], providence [*rizq*] and timing [*ajal*]. The pen has run dry on what is to be.

Allāh has already settled everything. His decree [*qadā’*] is eternally predetermined [*sābiq*]. Yet the law [*ḥukm*] has come, and commandment, prohibition and obligation have been superimposed, so it is not permissible for anyone to use predestination as an argument against the law. One should rather say:

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

O my people! Act in accordance with this outer aspect, this black-on-white, until it brings you to act in accordance with the inner aspect of this matter. If you act on this outer [*ẓāhir*] it will lead you to understanding of the inner [*bāṭin*]. The first to grasp it will be your innermost being [*sirr*], then your heart [*qalb*] will convey it to your personal faculties [*nafs*]. Your personal faculties will convey it to your tongue, and your tongue will convey it to the people, to whom it will be transmitted for their welfare and benefit.

How good it would be for you, if you complied with the wishes of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and loved Him! Alas for you, you merely pretend to love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Surely you know that such love has preconditions? These preconditions include compliance with His wishes regarding yourself and other people. Further preconditions are that you must not rely on anyone but

Him, and that you feel comfortable with Him and not ill at ease in His presence. When the love of Allāh takes up residence in a servant's heart, he delights in His company and hates everything that distracts him from it. Repent your false claim! This is not something that comes about through pious seclusion, making wishes, lying, hypocrisy and artificial show. Repent, and stick to your repentance, because the important thing is not your mere repentance, but your sticking to it. The important thing is not that you plant a seed, but that it should take root, put out branches and yield fruit.

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also went on to say:

Persist in complying with the wishes of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) through trouble and pain, poverty and affluence, hardship and ease, sickness and health, good and bad, giving and withholding. I see no cure for you except submission [*taslīm*] to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When He inflicts something upon you, do not recoil from Him, do not dispute with Him over it, and do not complain about Him to others, because such reactions will add to your suffering. You had better be calm, quiet and unobtrusive. Stay there in His presence, and watch what He is doing within you and with you, so you may enjoy the way He brings about change and transformation. If you are with Him like this, He will surely turn loneliness [*wahsha*] into fellowship [*uns*], and the realization of His Oneness [*tawhīd*] into enjoyment [*farḥa*] of Him.

O Allāh, install us in Your court and in Your company! And:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire!

Fifth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 12th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O young man! What about servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*] to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Come, offer genuine servitude, and accept what is quite sufficient for all your own concerns. You are a slave running away from your Master. Go back to Him, submit to Him and humble yourself through obedience to His commands and prohibitions, and patience and compliance with His decree. When this has been fully accomplished on your part, your servitude to your Master will be complete, and you will receive quite enough from Him. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Does not Allāh suffice His servant? (39:36)

When your servitude to Him is as it should be, He will love you and make His love strong in your heart. He will befriend you and draw you near to Him, with no trouble and without your having to seek the companionship of any other, so that you will be well pleased with Him under all circumstances. Even if He were to make the broad earth narrow for you, even if He were to block the wide gates against you, you would still not be displeased with Him, nor would you approach the door of any other. You would feel a link with Moses (peace be upon him), in that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) said concerning him:

And we had forbidden foster mothers to him before then. (28:12)

Our Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is Witness [*Shāhid*] to all things, Present [*Hāḍir*] in all things, Watchful [*Raḳīb*] over all things, and Near [*Qarīb*] to all things. You cannot dispense with Him. What are we to make of denial after direct knowledge [*ma‘rifā*]? Alas for you,

you know Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) by experience, yet you turn away and deny Him! Do not turn away from Him, because then you will be deprived of all that is good. Be patient with Him; do not lose patience with Him. Do you not know that he who has patience has power [*man ṣabara qadara*]? What sense does this make? What is this haste in aid of? Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

O you who believe, be patient, and vie in patience; be steadfast, and observe your duty to Allāh, in order that you may succeed. (3:200)

On the subject of patience we find many verses [*āyāt*] in the Qur'ān, all pointing out what goodness and blessings it contains, what fine rewards and gifts and comforts, for both this world and the hereafter. You must make a practice of it, and then you will see the benefit, here and now as well as in the future. You must visit the tombs [*qubūr*], pay calls upon the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], and perform deeds of charity [*fi'l al-khair*], then your affairs will get on the right track. Do not be among those who take no notice of good advice, and who fail to practice what they do hear. Four things make your religion disappear:

First: That you do not practice what you know [*lā ta'malūna bimā ta'lamūn*];

Second: That you practice what you do not know [*ta'malūna bimā lā ta'lamūn*];

Third: That you do not learn what you do not know [*lā tata'allamūna mā lā ta'lamūn*], and so remain ignorant;

Fourth: That you prevent people from learning what they do not know [*min ta'allumi mā lā ya'lamūn*].

O my people! When you attend sessions dedicated to the practice of divine remembrance [*majālis adh-dhikr*], you go there for the pleasant entertainment, not for the spiritual therapy [*mudāwāt*]. You contradict the exhortation of the preacher [*wā'iz*] and come to the defense of sin and error, as you ridicule, mock and poke fun at him. You are playing a risky game. You are each on your own with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Repent and mend your ways. Do not imitate the enemies of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Use what you hear to good advantage.

O young man! You have limited yourself to habitual behavior [*ʿāda*], and you are setting limits on Allāh in your quest for shares of fortune [*aqṣām*], as you concentrate on the worldly means [*sabab*], forgetting the Original Cause [*Musabbib*] and the need for absolute trust [*tawakkul*] in Him. You must start work afresh, with sincere devotion [*ikhhlās*] to Him. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

I have created the jinn and humankind only that they may serve Me.
(51:56)

He has not created them to be crazy. He has not created them to amuse themselves. He has not created them just to eat, drink, sleep and have sexual relations. Come to your senses, you heedless fools! Your heart has only to take one step toward Him, and His love [*ḥubb*] will take several steps toward you. He is more eager for the lovers' meeting [*liqāʾ al-muḥibbīn*] than they are.

Allāh sustains whomever He will, without reckoning. (2:212)

When He wants a servant [*ʿabd*] to do something, He prepares him for it. This is something that has to do with inner meanings [*maʿānī*], not outer forms [*ṣuwar*]. When what I have referred to has been fully accomplished by a servant, he has achieved genuine abstinence [*zuḥd*] from this world and the hereafter, and from everything apart from the Master. He will now receive true fitness [*ṣiḥḥa*]. He will receive nearness [*qurb*]. He will receive dominion [*mulk*], sovereignty [*salṭana*] and authority [*imāra*]. His speck of dust will become a mountain; his tiny drop, an ocean; his star, a moon; his moon, a sun; his little, much; his obliteration [*maḥw*], existence [*wujūd*]; his annihilation [*fanāʾ*], perpetuity [*baqāʾ*]; his mobility [*ḥaraka*], stability [*ṭabāt*]. His tree will grow tall; it will tower up to the heavenly throne [*ʿarsh*], while its roots are in the earth and its branches provide shade in this world and the hereafter. What are these branches? Wisdom and knowledge. For him this world comes to be like a signet ring. Nothing worldly controls him, and nothing otherworldly confines him. Neither king [*malik*] nor mameluke [*mamlūk*] is his owner. No obstacle impedes him. No one takes him to task. No disturbance distresses him.

When this has been fully accomplished, this servant is properly equipped to stay among the people, to lend them a helping hand, and to save them from drowning in the ocean of this world. For if the Lord

of Truth intends to use His servant as an instrument for doing good, He makes him their guide, their physician, their educator, their trainer, their translator and interpreter [*tarjumān*], their good omen, their gift, their lamp and their sun. If He wishes to use him in this way, so shall it be. If not, He will keep him in hiding in His presence, and make him invisible to others. A few individuals of this category He does send back to the people, with total protection [*ḥifẓ kullī*] and total immunity [*salāma kullīyya*]. He enables them to improve the people's welfare and to give them guidance.

One who renounces the pleasures of this world is made to suffer otherworldly trials, while one who renounces both this world and the hereafter is tested by the Lord of this world and the hereafter. You have been as careless as if you would never have to die, as if you would not be assembled on the Day of Resurrection, would not be called to give account of yourselves before the Lord of Truth, and would not have to cross the narrow bridge [*aṣ-ṣirāt*]. These are your attributes [*ṣifāt*], and yet you have pretensions to Islām and faith [*īmān*]. This Qur'ān and knowledge stand as evidence against you if you do not put them into practice. If you attend the lectures of the scholars [*ʿulamāʾ*], but do not accept what they tell you, your attendance there will count as evidence against you. You will be held responsible for the offense committed, just as if you met the Messenger himself (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and did not submit to his command.

On the Day of Resurrection all creatures will be enveloped in fear of the Majesty [*jalāl*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), of His Might [*ʿaẓama*], His Grandeur [*kibriyāʾ*] and His Justice [*ʿadl*]. The kings of this world will fade away, but His Kingship will remain. All must return to Him on the Day of Resurrection, and the royalty of the [Lord's] people [*al-qawm*] will be made manifest, as will their nobility and wealth, and the honor bestowed upon them by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Today they are put in charge of men and cities and the hills and mountains [*awṭād*: lit., pegs] of the earth. The earth's support depends on them. They are the commanders [*umarāʾ*] and leaders of the people, and the deputies [*nuwwāb*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). This applies to them in the allegorical sense [*maʿnā*], not with regard to outer form [*ṣūra*]. Today as allegory, tomorrow in concrete form.

The courage [*shajāʿa*] of those who do battle with the unbelievers comes into play in their encounter and tenacious combat with the foe. The courage of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], is shown in their encounter with their own selves [*nufūs*], passions [*ahwiya*] and natural instincts [*ṭibāʿ*], devils [*shayāṭīn*], and those evil companions who are human devils. The courage of the special few [*khawāṣṣ*] lies in the renunciation of both this world and the hereafter, and of anything at all that is apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O young man! Wake up before you are awakened by a call you did not ask for! Practice your religion and mix with religious people [*ahl ad-dīn*], for they are the [right kind of] people. The most intelligent people are those who obey Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and the most ignorant people are those who rebel against Him.

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said: “Your hands are dusty,” meaning “you are poor,” because someone who was rich would not get dust on his hands. If you mix with religious people and get to love them, your hands will be enriched and your heart will flee from hypocrisy and those who practice it. No merit is acquired by the hypocrite whose deeds are only for show [*al-munāfiq al-murāʿī*]. Nothing will be accepted of you unless you intended it to be for His sake. The outer form of your deed will not be accepted of you, but only its inner significance [*maʿnā*]. If you act in opposition to your lower self, your passions, your devils and your worldly interests, your deed will then be accepted of you. Do your work and let go of it sincerely. Attach no importance to your work in general; it will only be accepted if you intended it for His sake, not for the sake of other people.

Alas for you, you do your work to please creatures [*khalq*], and then you want it to be accepted by the Lord of Truth [*Ḥaqq*] (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is stupidity on your part. Desist from greediness and vanity and making merry. Reduce your jollity and increase your mournfulness, because you are in the abode of sorrow, in the jailhouse.

Our Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) was always pondering deeply, seldom merry, often full of sorrows. He seldom laughed, although he would always smile to make other people feel better. His heart was full of sorrows and concerns. Except to attend to the Companions [*aṣ-ṣaḥāba*] and the affairs of this world, he would not leave his house and would not socialize with anyone.

O young man! When your private relationship [*khalwa*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is as it should be, your innermost being [*sirr*] will be in awe and your heart will be serene. Your gaze will become strong and steady, your heart will become reflective, and your spirit [*rūh*] and your inner content [*ma'nā*] will attain to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The contemplation of worldly matters is a punishment and an obstacle, while the contemplation of the hereafter is knowledge and life for the heart. Whenever contemplation is granted to a servant [of the Lord], he is given knowledge of the states and conditions [*aḥwāl*] of this world and the hereafter.

Alas for you, you waste your heart on this world, when Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has already finished allotting you your shares in it, and has decreed their appointed times, known only to Him. Every day He supplies you once again with fresh sustenance [*rizq*], whether you go looking for it or not. Your greed puts you to shame in the sight of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and in the eyes of His creatures. With a shortage of faith [*īmān*], you go looking for sustenance; with an excess of faith, you deliberately refrain from looking for it; and when faith is perfect and complete, you never even give it a thought.

O young man! Do not mix seriousness with jesting. Since you cannot control your heart in the company of creatures, how can it come together with the Creator? While you are associating [*mushrik*] with the secondary cause [*sabab*], how can you be with the Original Cause [*Musabbib*]? How can something external [*ẓāhir*] combine with something internal [*bāṭin*]; what you do understand with what you do not understand; what belongs to creatures with what belongs to the Creator? How ignorant are those who forget the Originator and preoccupy themselves with the secondary cause, clinging to the latter and abandoning the former, forgetting the Everlasting [*al-Bāqī*] and enjoying that which must pass away [*al-fānī*]!

O young man! You make friends with the ignorant, and so you get infected with their ignorance. The friendship of a fool is a stupid friendship. Make friends with believers who put their knowledge into practice [*al-mu'minīna'l-āmilīna bi-ilmihim*]. How fine is the behavior of the believers in all their dealings! How strong are they in their struggles to subdue their lower selves [*nufūs*] and their desires [*ahwiya*]! This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The believer's joy shines in his face, while his sadness stays in his heart.

This is because of his fortitude, which enables him to display a cheerful countenance to other people, while hiding his sadness in the space he shares only with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). His anxiety [*hamm*] is constant, and he is given to frequent pondering [*tafakkur*]. He sheds many tears, and laughs but little. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

There is no comfort [*rāḥa*] for the believer, other than the meeting with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The believer hides his sorrow behind his cheerfulness. His outer being moves around to earn a livelihood, while his inner being is at rest with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). His outer being belongs to his dependents, while his inner being belongs to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He does not reveal his innermost being to his wife and children, to his neighbor and his neighbor's wife, nor to any other creature of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He pays heed to the words of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

Use the help of secrecy [*kitmān*] in your affairs.

He always tries to hide what is going on inside him, so if does lose his self-control, or if a wrong word slips from his tongue, he must do what he can to set things right, by modifying the expression he has used, disguising the feelings he has shown, and offering an apology for his exhibition.

O young man! Treat me as your looking glass. Treat me as the mirror of your heart and your innermost being, as the mirror of your deeds. Come up close to me, because then you will see things in yourself that you cannot see at a distance from me. If you have some need in your religion [*dīn*], you must avail yourself of me, because I will not show you any favoritism when it comes to the religion of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). My manner can be quite rude where Allāh's religion (Almighty and Glorious is He) is at stake. I was trained by a rough hand, not conducive to hypocrisy.

Leave your worldly interests at home, and come here close to me, for I am standing at the gate of the hereafter. Stand beside me and hear what I have to say, then put it into practice before you die, which will be all too soon. Everything revolves around the fear [*khawf*] and dread [*khashya*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you have no fear

of Him, you have no security in this world or the hereafter. The dread of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the very essence of knowledge. This is why Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Only those of His servants fear Allāh who have knowledge. (38:28)

No one fears Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) except for those who have knowledge and put that knowledge into practice [*al-‘ulamā’ u’l-‘ummālu bi’l-‘ilm*], those who both know and act, and do not expect any reward for their deeds from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Rather do they seek His countenance and nearness to Him. They wish for His love [*maḥabba*] and to be delivered from His remoteness and separation. They wish to have no door, worldly or otherworldly, shut in their faces. They care nothing for this world, for the hereafter, or for anything apart from Him. This world belongs to one set of people, the hereafter belongs to another set of people, and the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) belongs to yet another set of people, namely to the truly convinced believers who really know and love Him [*al-mu’minūn al-mūqinūn al-‘ārifūn al-muḥibbūn*], who are dutiful and humbly submissive toward Him [*al-muttaqūn al-khāshi‘ūn*], and who are grief-stricken and contrite [*al-maḥzūnūn al-munkasirūn*] for His sake. These are a set of people who fear Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in the unseen [*bi’l-ghaib*]. He is invisible [*ghā’ib*: lit., absent] to their external eyes, but present [*ḥādīr*] in front of the eyes of their hearts. How can they fail to fear Him, when He is every day about some awesome business, effecting change and transformation, helping this one and disappointing this other, bringing this one to life and causing this other to die, accepting this one and rejecting this other, drawing this one near and keeping this other at a distance?

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

O Allāh, bring us near to You, do not send us far away from You, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Sixth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, on Friday the 15th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The hearts of the people [of the Lord] are serene, pure, forgetful of the creation, mindful of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), forgetful of this world, mindful of the hereafter, forgetful of what belongs to them, and mindful of what belongs to Him. You are kept separate from them and from everything in which they are involved. You are preoccupied with your worldly interests to the exclusion of your interest in the hereafter. Abandoning proper deference toward your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), you behave toward him with impudence. Accept the good counsel of your believing brother, and do not contradict him, because he can see on your behalf what you cannot see for yourself. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The believer is the believer's mirror [*al-mu' min mir' ātu'l-mu' min*].

The believer is honest in the advice he gives to his fellow believer. He makes clear to him things that are hidden from him, shows him the difference between good deeds and bad, and makes him aware of his rights and his duties. Glory be to Him who has imbued my heart with good advice for people, and has made giving it my chief concern. I am a giver of good counsel, and I seek no recompense for this. My interest in the hereafter is already credited to my account with my Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and I am not seeking any worldly gain. I am not the servant [*abd*] of this world, nor of the hereafter, nor indeed of anything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). I serve only the Creator [*al-khāliq*], the Single [*al-wāḥid*], the One [*al-aḥad*], the Eternal [*al-qadīm*]. My happiness lies in your salvation [*ḥalāl*], and my sadness in your perdition [*ḥalāk*]. When I see the face of an honest seeker who has achieved success with a helping hand from me, my appetite is satisfied, my thirst is quenched and I feel well

clothed. I rejoice at how someone like him has turned out under my instruction.

O young man! My goal is you, not I; that you should be transformed, not I. I have already made the crossing. The affection you feel for me is really for your own sake. Hang on to me, so that you can make the crossing swiftly.

O my people! Cut out that arrogance toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His creatures. Recognize what you actually amount to, and be modest about yourselves. You started out as a sordid drop of a nasty-looking liquid, and you will end up as a corpse to be discarded. Do not be the kind of person who is driven by greed and chased by desire, the type whose desires will carry him to the doors of potentates [*salāṭīn*], in the hope of getting something from them which is not his allotted share, or to get from them through groveling and degradation that which has already been destined for him. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

The harshest punishment Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) inflicts on His servant is the quest for what has not been destined for him.

Woe unto you, so ignorant of destiny [*qadar*] and of the Pre-ordainer [*Muqaddir*]! Do you imagine that the sons of this world are capable of giving you that which has not been allotted to you? This must be the whispering [*waswasa*] of Satan, who has taken possession of your heart and your head. You are no servant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You are merely the servant of your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*], your devil [*shaitān*], your natural instincts [*tab'*], your cents and your dollars [lit., your dirham and your dīnār]. Endeavor to observe a successful person [*muflīh*], so that you may succeed by applying his method [*tarīq*].

According to one of the wise (may Allāh have mercy upon him): "He who has not seen a successful person will never succeed."

You do see one who is successful, but you see him with the eyes in your head, not with the eyes of your heart, your innermost being and your faith. Faith you do not possess, so you will surely have no insight with which to examine someone other than yourself. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

For indeed it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts within the bosoms. (22:46)

A person who is greedy to obtain things of this world through the agency of creatures, is trading religion [*dīn*] for figs [*tīn*]. He is trading that which is lasting for that which is short-lived, and there is no doubt that he will end up with neither the one nor the other. While you are still lacking in faith, you had better improve your livelihood; then you will not need people so that you sacrifice your religion to them and consume their goods in exchange. Once your faith is strong and fully developed, however, what is required of you is absolute trust [*tawakkul*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), separation from material means [*asbāb*] and detachment from those who possess them [*arbāb*], and taking your heart on a journey away from it all. You must move your heart away from your home town, your family, your place of business and your friends and acquaintances. You must hand over all you possess to your family, your brethren and your colleagues, so that you come to be as if the angel had taken your spirit [*rūḥ*], as if the claws of death had snatched you away, as if the earth had split asunder and swallowed you up, as if the waves of destiny [*al-qadar*] and foreordination [*al-quḍra as-sābiqa*] had swept you into the ocean of knowledge and drowned you. Material concerns are not harmful to one who has attained to this station [*maqām*], because they affect only his outer being [*ẓāhir*], not his inner being [*bāṭin*]. Such concerns [*asbāb*] belong to others, not to him.

O my people! If you incapable of practicing every aspect of what I have mentioned, about getting rid of material means and attachment to them as far as your hearts are concerned, then take one aspect and leave another. If you cannot deal with the whole, at least tackle a part. As our Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) used to say:

Free yourselves from worldly cares, as far as you can.

O young man! If you are able to free yourself from worldly cares, do so! If not, run quickly with your heart to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and hang on to the train of His mercy until worldly care leaves your heart. He is All-Capable [*Qādir ‘alā kulli shay’*], All-Knowing [*‘Ālim bi-kulli shay’*], and everything is in His power [*yad: lit., hand*]. Stick to His door and beg Him to purify your heart of all other than Him, and to fill it with faith [*al-īmān*], recognition of Him [*al-ma‘rifā lahu*], knowledge of Him [*al-‘ilm bihi*] and satisfaction with Him to the exclusion of His creatures [*al-ghinā bihi ‘an khalqihī*]. Beg

Him to grant you certitude [*al-yaqīn*] and delight your heart therewith, and to employ all your limbs and organs in obedience to Him. Apply to Him for everything, not to anyone other than Him. Do not submit to a creature like yourself, but to Him and to Him alone, and let all your dealings be with Him and for His sake, not the sake of any other.

O young man! Literal learning [*fiqh al-lisān*] without the action of the heart will not advance you by a single step toward the Truth. The journey is the journey of the heart. Nearness is the nearness of the innermost beings [*al-asrār*]. The work [*ʿamal*] is the work of meanings and intentions [*al-maʿānī*], together with physical observance of the rules of the sacred law [*ḥudūd ash-sharʿ*], and humility toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His servants. He who attaches importance to himself, has no importance. He who shows off his deeds to other people, has no deed to his credit. Good deeds must be done in private, not performed in public situations, apart from those obligatory religious duties [*farāʾid*] which are necessarily exposed to view.

Since you have long neglected to consolidate the foundation, what will it profit you to consolidate the superstructure above it? If the building is altered when the foundation has been secured, you can still explore the building. The foundation of good deeds is the affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] and sincerity [*ikhhlās*], so no good deed can be credited to someone who has neither *tawḥīd* nor sincerity. Give your work a firm foundation by practicing *tawḥīd* and sincerity, then build your deeds with the power and strength of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not with your own power and strength. The hand of Unity [*yad at-tawḥīd*] is the builder, not the hand of polytheism [*shirk*] and hypocrisy [*nifāq*]. The affirmer of Unity [*muwāḥḥid*] is the one whose work acquires high value, not so the hypocrite [*munāfiq*].

O Allāh, keep us far removed from hypocrisy in all our circumstances, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Seventh Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, on Sunday the 17th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O Allāh, bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, and:

Bestow upon us patience, and make our foothold sure. (2:250)

Multiply Your gifts to us, and endow us with thankfulness for them....

After completing this prayer of supplication [*du‘ā*], he went on to say:

O my people! Be patient, because this world is nothing but troubles and afflictions; only rarely is it otherwise than this. There is no blessing that does not have a misfortune by its side. There is no joy without attendant sorrow, no plenty that is not accompanied by some shortage. Give this world your life, and receive your allotted shares of it by virtue of the sacred law [*ash-shar‘*], for this is the remedy for accepting what is taken from the world.

O young man! Take the allotted shares [*aqṣām*] by virtue of the sacred law, if you are a seeker [*murīd*]; by virtue of the Lord’s command, if you are a special champion of the truth [*ṣiddīq*]; and by virtue of the action [*fi‘l*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), if you are a devout worshipper [*qānit*] who has arrived [*wāṣil*] and been drawn close [*muqarrab*]. Things will be sent to you, while the Commander gives you orders and prohibitions, and the action moves within you.

People are of three kinds: ordinary [*‘āmmiyy*], special [*khāṣṣiyy*], and extra-special [*khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*].

The ordinary kind is the pious Muslim who stands by the sacred law [*shar‘*]. He sticks to the path of the law [*ash-Sharī‘a*] and never separates from it. He acts in accordance with the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids you, abstain [from it]. (59:7)

When this is fully accomplished in his case, and he puts it into practice both outwardly [*ẓāhiran*] and inwardly [*bāṭinan*], it becomes an enlightened heart [*qalb munawwar*] by which he can see. So when he takes something by virtue of the sacred law, his heart is satisfied, and he seeks the inspiration [*ilhām*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), because His inspiration is universally relevant. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And He inspires it with awareness of what is wrong for it and what is right for it. (91:8)

Thus his heart is devout, while he views the inspiration of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and what it signifies from the exterior perspective, namely that the contents of this bread-winner's shop are goods belonging to him and at his disposal. Then he takes a fresh look, using the light shed by his heart, and views what he has from this perspective. This comes after he has completed his work in accordance with the sacred law, with the strength of his faith and his affirmation of Unity, after his heart has withdrawn from this world and its people, traversed its desert wastes and crossed its oceans. Then comes the dawn [*ṣubḥ*], and he receives the light of faith [*nūr al-īmān*], the light of nearness [*qurb*] to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), the light of good work [*ʿamal*], the light of patience [*ṣabr*], the light of serenity [*tu'ada*] and tranquillity [*tuma'nīna*]. All of this is the fruit after performance of the duties of the sacred law, and the blessed grace [*baraka*] of its fulfillment.

As for the *Abdāl* [spiritual deputies], who are the élite of the élite, they consult the sacred law, then they observe the command of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and His action [*fi'l*], His vibration [*tahrik*] and His inspiration [*ilhām*]. For what is beyond these three is destruction within destruction, sickness within sickness, unlawfulness [*ḥarām*] within unlawfulness, an ache in the head of religion, a tumor in its heart, and tuberculosis in its body.

O my people! His twists and turns [*taṣārif*] with you are designed to let Him see how you are working: Are you standing firm, or are you running away? Are you being honest, or are you telling lies? One who does not comply with the [Lord's] decree is neither befriended [*lā yurāfaqu*] nor favored [*lā yuwāfaqu*]. One who does not approve of

His decisions does not win His approval. One who does not give does not receive. One who does not carry burdens does not get to ride.

O ignoramus! You want everything changed and turned around. What you want is a second God [*ilāh*]. You want Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to comply with your wishes, but you have this back to front. Turn it the other way and you will get it right.

But for the decrees of destiny [*al-aqdār*], false claims would not be recognized for what they are. When practical tests [*tajārib*] are conducted, essential natures are revealed. Deny your own self its denial of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you were self-critical, you could be critical of others. To the extent that your faith is strong, you may eliminate abuses [*munkarāt*], and to the extent that it is weak, you should sit at home and pretend you have lost your tongue on the subject of their elimination. The feet of faith are those that stand firm in the encounter with the devils among men and jinn; they are those that stand firm when trials and tribulations befall. The feet of your faith are unsteady, so do not lay claim to faith. Hate all things and love the Creator of all things, then if He makes you love one of the things you have hated, you may do so in safety, because He is the One giving rise to the love, not you. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said:

I have been made to love three things belonging to this world of yours: perfume, women and my chief comfort [lit., the cooling of my eye], the *ṣalāt*-prayer.

He was made to love them after disliking, forsaking, renouncing and shunning them. You must now rid your heart of everything aside from Him, until He makes you love whatever part thereof He will.

Eighth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 19th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The pious pretender [*murāʿī*] wears clean clothes, but his heart is filthy. He abstains from permissible things, and is too lazy to earn a livelihood. He eats off his religion, and exercises no self-restraint at all. He consumes things that are explicitly forbidden [*ḥarām*]. His game may be hidden from the common folk [*ʿawāmm*], but it is not concealed from the élite [*khawāṣṣ*]. His asceticism [*zuḥd*] and obedient worship [*ṭāʿa*] are all superficial. His external facade is splendidly fashioned, but his interior is a ruin.

Woe unto you! Obedient service to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is performed by the heart [*qalb*], not the outer mold [*qālab*]. All these things are connected with hearts, innermost beings and spiritual qualities [*maʿānī*]. Strip yourself bare of what you now have on, so that I may get for you from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) an outfit that will never wear out. Get undressed so that He may clothe you. Take off the garment of your indifference to the rights [*ḥuqūq*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Take off the garment of your attachment to creatures and your idolization [*shirk*] of them. Take off the garment of lust, frivolity, conceit and hypocrisy, of your love of being acceptable to people and having them approach you and bring you gifts. Take off the clothing of this world, and put on the clothing of the hereafter. Divest yourself of your power, your strength and your very existence [*wujūd*], and throw yourself down before the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) without power, without strength, without attachment to material means [*sabab*], and without idolatrous worship of any created thing. Then, if you do this, you will see His gracious favors all around you. His mercy will come to join you,

and His blessing and benefit will clothe you and enfold you in their embrace. Flee to Him. Dedicate yourself wholly to Him, naked, with no you and no one other than you. Move toward Him in isolation, distinct from any other than Him. Move toward Him separately, apart, until He joins and connects you to your inner and outer forces [*quwā ṣāhirika wa-bāṭinika*]. Even if He were to close the whole universe [*al-akwān*] against you, and make you carry all its burdens, this would do you no harm; not at all, for He would protect you throughout.

When someone blots out creatures by virtue of his realization of Unity [*tawḥīd*], blots out this world by virtue of his renunciation [*zuḥd*], and blots out everything else apart from his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) by virtue of his longing, that person is completely prepared for righteousness [*ṣalāḥ*] and success [*najāḥ*], and he will enjoy the all the blessings of this world and the hereafter. You must experience the mortification of your lower selves, your desires and your devils, before you die. Experience the special death [*al-mawt al-khāṣṣ*] before the common death [*al-mawt al-‘āmm*].

O my people! Respond to me, for I am the crier of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), calling you to His door and His obedient service. I am not calling you to myself. The hypocrite does not call the people to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He); he is a self-promoter. He is looking for favors and acceptance, seeking worldly gain.

O ignorant one, you give up listening to words like these, and sit there in your cell, with only your own self and your passions for company! What you need first is the fellowship of the Shaikhs [*shuyūkh*], and the slaying of the lower self, the natural instincts and everything apart from the Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must stay by the door of their houses, I mean the Shaikhs', then after that you may go off by yourself, and sit in your cell alone with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When this has been fully accomplished by you, you will come to be a remedy for the people, a rightly guided guide [*ḥādī mahdī*] by permission of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

As you are now, your tongue is pious [*wari'*], but your heart is immoral [*fājir*]. Your tongue praises Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), while your heart resists Him. Your outer being is a Muslim, but your inner is an unbeliever [*kāfir*]. Your outer is a monotheist [*muwaḥḥid*], but your inner is a polytheist [*mushrik*].

Your asceticism [*zuhd*] is part of your facade. Your religion [*dīn*] is part of your facade. Inwardly, you are a mess. It is like whitewash on the water closet, i.e. the toilet, or a lock on the garbage can. Since this is how you are, Satan has set up camp in your heart and made it a place for him to live in.

The believer starts with the development of his inner being, then tackles the development of his outer being. Someone who is constructing a house will spend large sums of money on its interior while the gateway is just rubble; he will leave fixing the entrance until after he has completed the main building. One must likewise begin with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and earning His good pleasure [*riḍā*], and then pay attention to creatures with His permission. The first stage is to acquire [*taḥṣīl*] the hereafter, and only then to obtain one's allotted shares [*aqsām*] in this world.

Ninth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 22nd of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Allāh does not torment His loved one, but He may well put him to the test.

The believer is secure in the knowledge that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will not make him experience something as a trial unless this will result in some benefit, either for this world or for the hereafter. He therefore accepts misfortune cheerfully, bears it with patience, and harbors no resentment against his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). His Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) keeps him distracted from the affliction.

O you who are so preoccupied with this world, you should give up discussion of these spiritual stations [*maqāmāt*], because you are talking only with your tongues, not with your hearts. You are turning your backs on Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), on His words, and on His Prophets and their followers in reality [*ḥaqīqa*], those who are their deputies [*khulafā'*] and their trustees [*awṣiyā'*]. You are quarreling with destiny [*al-muqaddar*] and omnipotence [*al-quḍra*]. You have contented yourselves with the gifts of creatures, instead of the gifts of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His blessings. Nothing you have to say will be given a hearing by Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His righteous servants, until you repent, make your repentance sincere and lasting, and comply with destiny and the divine decree [*al-qadar wa'l-qadā'*] in what is to your advantage and what is to your

disadvantage, in that which gives honor and that which is humiliating, in affluence and poverty, in health and sickness, in what you like and in that which you dislike.

O my people! Follow, so that you may be followed. Serve, so that you may come to be served. Follow the ordainments and decrees [*al-aqdiyya wa'l-aqdār*] and serve them, so that they may come to follow you and serve you. Submit to them until they submit to you. Have you not heard [the sayings of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace)]:

As you pay allegiance, so shall you receive allegiance [*kamā tadīnu tudānu*], and: According to how you are, so shall authority be conferred upon you.

Your actions are your agents [*a' mālukum 'ummālukum*]. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is no cruel tyrant to His slaves. He rewards little with much. The correct He does not call false, and the honest He does not call a liar.

O young man! If you serve, you will be served. If you are dedicated, you will receive dedication. Serve the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and do not neglect Him by engaging in the service of these potentates [*salāṭin*] who can do you no real harm nor good. What can they give you? Can they give you that which has not been allotted to you? Or can they allot you anything that has not been allotted to you by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Nothing is originated with them. If you say that their giving has its origin with them, you are speaking as an unbeliever [*kafarta*]. Do you not know that there is no giver [*mu'ī*], no withholder [*māni'*], no injurer [*dārr*], no benefactor [*nāfi'*], no expediter [*muqaddim*] and no deferrer [*mu'akhkhir*] except Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? If you say, "I know all that," then I must ask you: "How can it be that you know all this, and yet you give others priority over Him?"

Woe unto you! How can you spoil your life hereafter through your interest in this world? How can you spoil your obedience to your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He) by obeying your lower self, your passions, your devils and fellow creatures? How can you spoil your pious devotion [*taqwā*] by complaining to others apart from Him? Do you not know that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is ever guarding the believers, helping them, protecting them, teaching them, making them

aware of Himself, taking them by the hand and saving them from disasters, looking into their hearts and providing them with sustenance from sources beyond their imagination?

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in one of His Books:

O son of Adam, be as unassuming with Me as you would be with your good neighbor.

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

If the servant locks his doors, pulls down his shutters and hides away from people, then commits sins against Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in private, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say: "O son of Adam, you treat Me as the least significant of those who are watching you!"

Tenth Discourse

It was in the early morning of Sunday, the 24th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

I and the truly devout members of my Community [*umma*] are free from affectation [*takalluf*].

One who is truly devout [*taqī*] does not perform his worship of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in an affected manner, because it has become quite natural to him, so he worships Allāh both outwardly and inwardly without any affectation on his part.

As for the hypocrite [*munāfiq*], he is always pretending, wherever he may be and whatever he may be doing, especially when it comes to the worship of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), which he fakes on the surface and inwardly neglects. He is incapable of experiencing the conduct of the truly devout. Every place has its motto [*li-kulli makān maqāl*], and every job has men who are right for it [*li-kulli ‘amal rijāl*]; for war some men are naturally suited. O hypocrites, repent your hypocrisy! Come back from your fugitive exile! How can you let Satan laugh at you and vent his malice on you? You may perform the *ṣalāt*-prayers and keep the fast, but you do this for the sake of creatures, not for the sake of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and the same is true if you give charity [*taṣaddaqtum*], pay the alms-due [*ṣakkaitum*] and go on pilgrimage [*ḥajajtum*]. You are: “Toiling, weary” (88:3). Soon you will be exposed to the heat of a scorching fire, if you do not come to your senses, repent and make amends. You must follow [the traditional Islamic practices] without heretical innovation [*ibtidā’*]. You must follow the teachings [*madhhab*] of the righteous predecessors

[*as-salaf aṣ-ṣālih*]. Walk on the straight highroad [*al-jādda al-mustaqīma*]. No extremes of religious doctrine! [*lā tashbih wa-lā ta'īl*: lit., no ascription of human characteristics (to Allāh), and no denial of all attributes (to Him)]. Just follow the Sunna [exemplary practice] of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) without affectation and artificiality [*tatabbu'*], without bigotry [*tashaddud*], without bragging [*tamashduq*] and intellectual pretentiousness [*tama'qul*]. You should be capable of what was possible for those who have gone before you.

Woe unto you! You learn the Qur'ān by heart, but you do not put it into practice. You memorize the Sunna of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), but you do not practice it. So what do you do this for? You tell other people what they must do, but you do not do it yourself. You tell them what they must not do, but you do not refrain from it. As the Almighty and Glorious One has said:

It is most hateful in the sight of Allāh that you say what you do not do.
(61:2)

Why do you say things and then contradict them? Have you no sense of shame? Why do you lay claim to faith, when you do not believe? Faith [*al-īmān*] is the opponent of disasters. It is the patient bearer of our burdens. It is the wrestler. It is the fighter. Faith is the generous distributor of its worldly fortune. Faith behaves generously for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), while desire acts generously for the sake of the devil and for selfish purposes. He who has missed the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) sits at the doors of His creatures. He who has lost the path [*ṭarīq*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and gone astray from it, stays on the path of creatures. When Allāh wishes someone well, He shuts the doors of creatures in his face, and cuts him off from their gifts, in order to bring that person back to Himself. He directs him away from the inland creeks toward the river bank. He directs him away from nothing toward something.

Woe unto you! You are happy to be dwelling beside the creeks in [the cool rainy season of] winter, but soon the [fiercely hot] summer will come and your water will all dry up. So you will die, unlike the man who lives on the bank of the great river, because his supply of water is not

exhausted in the summer, and in the winter it increases and becomes very plentiful. Be with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you will become a rich man [*ghanī*], a noble [*ʿazīz*], a leader [*amīr*], a commander [*muʿmir*], a guide [*dalīl*]. When someone has no need of anything but Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), everything has need of him. This is something that does not come about through passive resignation [*takhallī*] and mere wishing [*tamannī*], but through something that becomes settled in the bosom [*fiʿṣ-ṣudūr*] and is confirmed by active work [*ʿamal*].

O young man! Let dumb silence be your custom, unobtrusiveness your habit, and fleeing from creatures your whole aim and purpose. If you can dig yourself a den in the earth to hide away in, do it. This should be your regular practice until your faith has matured, your certitude [*iqān*] has gained a firm footing, the wing of your truthfulness [*ṣidq*] has grown all its feathers, and the eyes of your heart have both opened. Then you may rise up from your home in the ground and fly into the air of the knowledge of Allāh. You will roam through the East and the West, over land and sea, across the plains and the mountains. You will tour the heavens and the regions of the earth, in the company of the Guide [*Dalīl*], the Guardian [*Khafīr*], the Companion [*Raḥīq*]. So now set your tongue free to speak. Cast off the habit of unobtrusiveness. Stop running away from people, and come out of your den to meet them, since you can be a remedy for them without detriment to yourself. Never mind how few they may happen to be, or how many, and whether they come forward or back away. Be indifferent to their praise and their blame alike. Never mind. Wherever you alight, you will glean what you can [*aina saqaṭta laqaṭta*]. And you are with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O my people! Be aware of this Creator, and practice good behavior in His presence. As long as your hearts are remote from Him, you will behave toward Him badly, but when they draw near, your conduct will improve. The pages at the palace gate indulge in foolish banter before the royal procession, but when the king rides by, a dumb silence falls upon them and they start to behave correctly, because they are now close to him. Each of them scurries to his corner.

Paying court to creatures is the very same thing as turning one's back on the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will find no salvation [*falāh*] until you break off relations with people of influence and means, and stop regarding creatures as the source of benefit and loss. You are healthy yet sick, rich yet poor, alive yet dead, existent yet nonexistent. Till when this running away from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and avoidance of Him? Till when the cultivation of this world and the devastation of the hereafter? Each one of you has but a single heart, so how can he love both worlds with it? How can it contain both the Creator and the creation [*al-khāliq wa'l-khalq*]? How can this be achieved as a simultaneous condition in a single heart? This is a falsehood, and as the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) says:

Falsehood holds itself aloof from faith [*al-kadhibu mujānibu'l-īmān*].

Each earthenware pot exudes its own contents. Your deeds are clues to the firmness of your belief [*i'tiqād*]. Your outer is a clue to your inner. This is why a certain wise man said: "The outer is the address of the inner [*aṣ-ṣāhir 'unwān al-bāṭin*]." Your inner is outwardly apparent to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and to His special favorites [*khawāṣṣ*] among His servants. If one of these should ever come your way, you must behave decently in his presence. Repent your sins before meeting with him, consider yourself insignificant beside him, and relate to him with humility. If you humble yourself for the sake of the righteous [*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*], you are likely to be humble toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Humble yourself, therefore, because when a person humbles himself, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will raise him up high. Be on your best behavior with anyone who is senior to you, because the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Blessed grace [*baraka*] resides in your seniors [*akābir*].

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) was not intending to refer to seniority in age alone, but to advanced age combined with pious dedication [*taqwā*] to fulfilling the commandments and observing the prohibitions [of the sacred law], and constant adherence to the

Book and the Sunna [i.e., the Qur'ān and the Prophet's exemplary practice]. Of course not, because there is many an elder [*shaikh*] who deserves neither respect nor salutation, and in seeing whom there is no blessed grace. The Seniors [*al-akābir*] are the devout [*al-muttaqūn*], the righteous [*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*], the pious [*al-mutawarrī'ūn*], who put their knowledge into practice [*al-āmilūna bi'l-ilm*] and who are sincere in their practice [*al-mukhliṣūn fi'l-amal*]. The Seniors are the pure hearts that turn away from everything apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The Seniors are the wise hearts with experience of Allāh [*al-ārifā bi'llāh*] (Almighty and Glorious is He), that know and are close to Him.

Whenever hearts abound in knowledge, they draw nearer to their Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whenever a heart contains love of this world, it is screened from Allāh, and whenever a heart contains love of the hereafter, it is barred from nearness to Allāh. To the degree of your longing [*raghba*] for this world, your longing for the hereafter is diminished, and to the degree of your longing for the hereafter, your longing for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is diminished. Be aware of your degrees, and do not assign yourselves to a level [*manzil*] on which Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has not placed you. This is why a certain wise man said: "If someone is not aware of his own degree, the decrees of destiny will make him aware of it [*man lam ya'rif qadrahu 'arrafat-hu'l-aqdāru qadrahu*]." Do not sit in a place from which you will be made to get up. When you enter a house, do not sit in a place in which the master of the house has not invited you to sit, because you may be told to move. If you refuse, you will be forced to get up, suffer humiliation, and be obliged to leave.

O young man! You have been wasting your life on the study of books and memorizing the knowledge in them without putting it into practice. What good will it do you? As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say to the Prophets and the scholars on the Day of Resurrection: "You were the shepherds of the people, so how did you care for your flocks?" And He will say to the kings and the rich folk: "You were the custodians of my treasures. Did you reach out to the poor? Did you educate the orphans? Did you refund My due, which I prescribed to you?"

O my people! Take warning from the admonitions of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and accept what he tells you. Your hearts are so hard! Glory be to the One who has made me capable of putting up with creatures! Whenever I yearn to fly away, along come the scissors of destiny to clip my wings, and yet I find consolation, of course, in the fact that I am residing in the parklands [*barāh*] of the King.

Woe unto you, O hypocrite, you wish I would leave this town. If I did move on, the situation would be altered, the members would split up, and it would be a different story. But I fear the punishment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) on account of the undue haste. I do not chart my own course; no, I cannot match the skill of destiny, so I comply with His wishes and submit to Him. O Allāh, [grant] peace and salvation [*salāman wa-taslīman*]!"

Woe unto you! You scoff at me while I am standing by the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Summon the people to Him; you will see your response. I build one cubit upward and thousands downward. O hypocrites, you will see the torment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His punishment in this world and the hereafter. The time is pregnant [*hublā*]; you will see what comes of it. I am subject to the transformative power [*taqlīb*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Now He makes me become a mountain, then He turns me into a speck of dust. Now He makes me become an ocean, then He turns me into a drop of water. Now He makes me become a sun, then He turns me into a spark and a flash of lightning. He switches me around, as He switches night and day.

Every day He is about some awesome business. (55:29)

At every moment, indeed. You have all day, while others have this moment.

O young man! If you wish to breathe easy and feel good at heart [*in aradta sa'ata's-ṣadri wa-ṭība'l-qalb*: lit., if you wish for expansiveness of the breast and goodness of the heart], do not listen to what people say, and pay no attention to their talk. Surely you know that many of them are neither intelligent nor perceptive, and that they have no faith [*lā yu'minūn*], but actually disbelieve and do not accept the truth?

Follow the group [*qawm*] who understand none but the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), who listen to none but Him, and who see none but Him. Suffer with patience the harm done by people, as you seek the good pleasure [*riḍā*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Patiently endure the various trials by which He puts you to the test.

This is the normal practice [*daʿb*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in dealing with His humble chosen servants [*maʿa ʿibādihiʿl-muṣṭafainaʿl-mukhbiṭīn*]. He cuts them off from everything, and tests them with various misfortunes, disasters and ordeals. He makes things cramped for them in this world and the hereafter, and everywhere from the heavenly throne [*al-ʿarsh*] to the earth below. Thus He annihilates their existence. Then, when He has annihilated their present existence, He brings them into being for Him and for no other. He makes them reside with Him and not with any other. He produces them as another creation. In His own words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Then We produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allāh, the Best of Creators! (23:14)

The first creation was generic [*mushtarak*], but this creation is uniquely individual [*mufrad*]. He makes him distinct from his brethren and all other members of the human race. He changes his former character [*maʿnā*] and replaces it. He makes what was his high point become his low point. He makes him a holy [*rabbānī*: lit., belonging entirely to the Lord], spiritual [*rūḥānī*] being, whose heart has no room for contemplating creation, and the door of whose innermost being [*sirr*] is barred to creatures. He makes this world and the hereafter, the Garden [of Paradise] and the Fire [of Hell], and all created things and entities, appear to him as one single thing. Then He hands this thing over to his innermost being, and he swallows it whole, although there is no sign of his having done so.

Thus He manifests His power, as He manifested it in the staff of Moses (peace be upon him). Glory be to the One who manifests His power in whatever He wishes to whomever He wishes! The staff of Moses swallowed many bulky objects, such as ropes and other things, without any change in its shape and size. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and

Glorious is He) wished to teach them that this was divine power [*qudra*] at work, not philosophical wisdom [*hikma*], because what the magicians [*sahara*] did on that day was philosophy and mechanical engineering [*handasa*], whereas what was manifested in the staff of Moses (peace be upon him) was power from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), a preternatural phenomenon [*kharq 'āda*] and a miracle [*mu'jiza*]. This is why the leader of the magicians said to one of his companions: "Take a look at Moses. What condition is he in?" and the man replied: "His complexion seems to have altered, and the staff is doing its work." Then he said: "This is through the action of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not of his own doing, because a magician is not afraid of his own magic [*sihr*] and the craftsman does not fear his own work." Then he believed in Him, and his companions followed his lead.

O young man! When will you move up from wisdom to power? When will your putting wisdom into practice lead you to the power of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? When will your sincerity [*ikhlaṣ*] in your actions lead you to the door of nearness to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)? When will the sun of direct knowledge [*ma'rifa*] let you see the faces of the hearts of the common folk [*al-awāmm*] and the élite [*al-khawāṣṣ*]?

Do not flee from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) on account of His trials. He is only testing you to find out whether or not you will go back to material concerns [*as-sabab*] and leave His door. Will you revert to the outer or to the inner? To the perceptible or to the imperceptible? To the visible or to the invisible?

O Allāh, do not put us to the test! O Allāh, bless us with nearness to You without a trial! O Allāh, [grant us] nearness and kindness! O Allāh, [grant] nearness with no remoteness! We lack the strength to bear remoteness from You, and to suffer tribulation, so bless us with nearness to You, as well as not having to go through the fire of misfortunes. But if there is to be no escape from the fire of misfortunes, let us experience it like the salamander, which is born and bred in the fire, and is neither harmed nor burned by it. Let it be for us like the fire of Abraham, Your special friend [*khalīl*]. Cause herbs to grow all around us, as You caused them to grow around him. Enable us to need nothing

at all, as You enabled him. Befriend us and take care of us, as You took care of him, and protect us as You protected him. *Āmīn*.

Abraham (peace be upon him) found the companion [*rafiq*] before the road [*ṭarīq*], the neighbor [*jār*] before the house [*dār*], the close friend [*anīs*] before the loneliness, the healthy diet [*ḥimya*] before the sickness, patience before the affliction, and cheerful acceptance before the verdict. Learn from your father Abraham (peace be upon him). Take him as your model in his words and his deeds. Glory be to the One who treated him kindly in the sea of his misfortune; the One who set him the task of swimming in the sea of affliction and helped him through it; the One who set him the task of charging against the enemy, while He was by the horse's head; the One who set him the task of climbing to a lofty spot, while His hand was at his back; the One who set him the task of inviting the people to his meal, while He took care of the expense! This is the inner, hidden kindness.

O young man! Be with Allāh in silence at the advent of His decree and His action, so that you may experience many kindnesses from Him. Have you not heard of young Galen the philosopher [*Jālīnūs al-ḥakīm*], and how he pretended to be dumb and stupid and speechless, until he became the store of all knowledge? The wisdom of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will not come toward your heart because of your frequent raving, your quarreling and finding fault with Him.

O Allāh, bless us with harmony and the abandonment of discord, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Eleventh Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 29th of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O my people! Be aware of Allāh and do not be ignorant of Him. Obey Allāh and do not rebel against Him. Comply with His wishes and do not oppose Him. Accept His decision gladly and do not quarrel with Him. Recognize the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) by His handiwork. He is the Creator [*al-Khāliq*], the Sustainer [*ar-Razzāq*], the First [*al-Awwal*], the Last [*al-Ākhir*], and the Outer [*aṣ-Ṣāḥir*] and the Inner [*al-Bāṭin*]. He is the First from All Eternity [*al-Qadīm al-Awwal*], the Endlessly Everlasting [*ad-Dā'im al-Abadī*], the Doer [*al-Fa'āl*] of whatever He will.

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

He is the Enricher [*al-Mughnī*]. He is the Impoverisher [*al-Mufqir*]. He is the Benefactor [*an-Nafi'*], the Giver of Life [*al-Muḥyi*], the Giver of Death [*al-Mumīt*], the Punisher [*al-Mu'āqib*], the Feared [*al-Makhūf*] and the Hoped [*al-Marjūw*]. Fear Him and fear none other than Him. Look to Him in hope, and have no hope of any but Him. Move in the orbit of His power and His wisdom, until the power and the wisdom prevail. Make it your practice to stay with the black-on-white [i.e., the letter of the sacred law] until something arises to prevent you from doing so, then you will be preserved from infringing the sacred law [*shar'*].

We are speaking here in terms of spiritual significance [*ma'nā*], not of outer form [*ṣūra*]. Only a few righteous individuals [*āḥād aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*] get to this point. There is nothing we need that goes outside the sphere of the sacred law. This subject is familiar only to those who have experience of it, so it is not something you can recognize from the bare

description. In all your affairs you should be in the presence of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), ready with girded loins to obey his commands and prohibitions and to follow him, until the King summons you to Himself. Then take your leave of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and enter His presence.

The *Abdāl* [spiritual deputies] are so called only because they exert no willpower [*lā yurīdūna irāda*] beside the Will of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and exercise no preference [*lā yakhtārūna ikhtiyāran*] beside His preference. They apply the external regulations and perform the proper external deeds. Then they attend to the special tasks assigned to them individually. As they progress to higher degrees [*darajāt*] and stages [*manāzil*], they come under more and more commands and prohibitions, until they reach a stage [*manzil*] at which there is neither command nor prohibition, but where the orders of the sacred law are carried out spontaneously on their behalf and are credited to them, while they are personally in a state of detachment [*maʿzīl*]. Their normal condition is that of absence [*ghaiba*] with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and they are present only when the moment comes for a commandment or prohibition to be observed. Thus they are careful not to violate any of the rules of the sacred law, because nonobservance of obligatory acts of worship [*ʿibādāt mafrūdāt*] constitutes heresy [*ẓandaqa*], while the perpetration of things forbidden [*maḥẓūrāt*] is a sin of disobedience [*maʿṣiya*]. The obligatory religious duties [*farāʾid*] never cease to be incumbent upon anyone under any circumstances.

O young man! Act in conformity with His ordinance [*ḥukm*] and His knowledge, and do not go beyond what is prudent. Do not forget the covenant [*ʿahd*]. Struggle with your lower self, your passions, your devils, your natural impulses and your [attachment to] this world. Never despair of the helpful support [*nuṣra*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), because it will come to you with your steady perseverance. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Surely Allāh is with those who are patient. (2:153)

The party [*ḥizb*] of Allāh, surely they will be the victors. (5:56)

As for those who strive in Our cause, surely We shall guide them to Our paths. (29:69)

Restrain the tongue of your lower self from its tendency to complain to fellow creatures. Be an adversary for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) against it and against all creatures. You must command them to obey Him and forbid them to sin against Him. You should prevent them from going astray, introducing heretical innovations [*ibtidāʿ*], following the passions and indulging the lower self. You should instruct them to follow the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the Sunna of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

O my people! Respect the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and take it as the guide to your behavior. It is the link between you and Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not consider it to be a thing created [*makhlūq*]. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) says: "This is My speech [*kalām*]," and you are saying "No!" Anyone who contradicts Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and maintains that the Qur'ān is a created object, is guilty of unbelief [*kufr*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and this Qur'ān is quit of him. This Qur'ān which is recited, which is read, which is heard, which is seen, which is written down in copied texts [*maṣāḥif*], this is His speech (Almighty and Glorious is He). Imām ash-Shāfi'i and Imām Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] (may Allāh be well pleased with them both) maintain that the pen [*al-qalam*] is created, but what is written with it is uncreated, and that the heart [*qalb*] is created, but what is learned by heart is uncreated [*ghayr makhlūq*].

O my people! Prove the sincerity of your respect for the Qur'ān by putting its teachings into practice, not by arguing about it. Firm belief [*i'tiqād*] is a matter of few words and many deeds. You must have faith in it. Accept its truth in your hearts, and act upon it with your physical limbs and organs. Concentrate on what is beneficial to you. Pay no attention to defective and inferior intellects.

O my people! That which is handed down by tradition [*manqūl*] cannot be arrived at by mental deduction, and the received text [*naṣṣ*] cannot be superseded by analogical reasoning [*qiyās*]. Do not pass over the clear evidence [*bayyina*] and settle for the unsubstantiated claim. People's property is not confiscated on the strength of a claim for which there is no proof. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

If people had only to make their claims to have them accepted, one group would claim the blood and property of another. But the burden of proof rests on the plaintiff, and the oath on the one who denies [the claim].

It is useless to have a learned tongue but an ignorant heart. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

There is nothing I am more afraid of for my Community [*umma*] than a hypocrite with a learned tongue.

O learned ones! O ignoramuses! O you who are present and you who are absent! Feel a sense of shame before Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Pay attention to Him with your hearts. Humbly submit to Him. Let yourselves be forged beneath the hammers of His decree. Be constantly thankful for His blessings. Shed light on the darkness in obedience to Him. Then, when this has become real as far as you are concerned, you will receive the grace [*karāma*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His honor and His Paradise in this world and the hereafter.

O young man! Try hard to make sure that nothing remains in this world that you still love. When this is fully accomplished as far as you are concerned, you will not be left to your own devices for the twinkling of an eye. If you become forgetful, you will be reminded, and if you become careless you will be brought to your senses. He will not allow you to take notice of anything whatsoever apart from Himself. Those who have tasted this will know all about it from experience. Members of this category are a few unique individuals who do not accept reliance upon creatures.

O hypocrites! Misfortunes and afflictions are uppermost in your hearts. Whenever the [Lord's] people look with the eyes of their hearts at anything other than the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), they are being hypocritical. Their salvation [*salāma*] lies in placing their trust in Him, throwing themselves down before Him, blinding themselves to His creation, and preventing their tongues from raising objections against Him. Then the days and nights may roll by them, and the months turn into years, but their condition will be one and the same, as they remain unchanging with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They are the most intelligent of all the creatures of

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you were to see them, you would call them lunatics [*majānīn*], and if they saw you they would say: “These folk do not believe in the Day of Judgment [*yawm ad-dīn*].” They are sad and broken-hearted in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and they are always fearful and apprehensive. Whenever the veil is lifted to reveal His Majesty and His Splendor to their hearts, their fear grows all the greater. Their hearts almost stop beating and their joints nearly come apart. Then, when He sees them in this condition, He opens up to them the gates of His Mercy [*rahma*], His Beauty [*jamāl*] and His Grace [*lutf*], giving them hope, so that their feelings are reassured.

The only people I like to look after are seekers of the hereafter and seekers of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). As for the seeker of this world, of creatures and self and desire, what can I do with him? Of course I would like to give him treatment, because he is sick, but only a physician has the patience to treat the sick.

Woe unto you! You are trying to keep your condition hidden from me, but it will not be concealed. You represent yourself to me as a seeker of the hereafter, although you are actually a seeker of this world. This delusion in your heart is written on your forehead. Your secret is public knowledge. That *dīnār* [gold coin] in your hand is a fake; it has a tiny fraction of gold, but the rest is silver. You cannot palm it off on me, because I have seen a lot just like it. Hand it over and let me keep it, so that I can melt it down, extract the gold it contains, and throw the rest away. A little bit of good stuff is better than a load of rubbish. Let me take charge of your *dīnār*, because I am a coin-minter and I have the right tools for the job.

Repent your showy pretense [*riyāʿ*] and hypocrisy [*nifāq*], and do not hesitate to confess yourself guilty of it. The majority of sincere people [*mukhlisūn*] have been hypocrites in their time. This is why a certain wise man (may Allāh’s mercy be upon him) said: “Only the hypocrite [*murāʿī*] really knows the meaning of sincerity [*ikhlas*].” Rarest of the rare is one who is sincere from the first stage of his career through to the last. Youngsters at an early stage are given to telling lies and playing with mud and dirt. They get themselves into dangerous predicaments, steal from their fathers and their mothers, and spread scandalous rumors

around. Gradually, as their intelligence develops, they give up one thing and then another, learning correct behavior from their parents and their teachers.

If Allāh wishes a person well, he will learn to behave properly and give up his bad habits, but if Allāh wishes him ill, he will go on living in the old same way, and so be a loser in this world and the hereafter. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has created the remedy [*dawāʾ*] as well as the disease [*dāʾ*]. Disobedience is a disease, and obedience is a remedy. Tyranny [*ẓulm*] is a disease, and justice [*ʿadl*] is a remedy. Going wrong [*khataʾ*] is a disease, and going straight [*ṣawāb*] is a remedy. Opposing the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a disease, and repenting the intoxication of sins is a remedy.

Your cure will be completely effected only when you detach your heart from creatures, connect it to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and raise it toward Him, to dwell in heaven while your spirit and your physical frame are still here on earth. As far as your heart is concerned, you will be secluded with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) because of what it knows. But you will participate with fellow creatures in acting according to the rule of law [*al-ḥukm*], not differing from them in any detail of this, so that neither He nor they will have any case against you. You will be alone with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in your inner being, while outwardly you will be in the company of fellow creatures.

Do not allow your lower self [*nafs*] to rear its head. Either you ride it, or it will ride you. Either you pin it down, or it will pin you down. If it does not obey you when you wish to obey Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), chastise it with the whips of hunger, thirst, humiliation, nakedness, and seclusion in a place devoid of any human companion. Do not lay these whips aside from it until it becomes tame, and obeys Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances. Even when it is tame, you must not stop chiding it: “Have you not done such and such, and such and such?” Apply the appropriate punishment to keep it permanently subdued.

For help in all of this, you must seek the will of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), comply with His wishes and refrain from disobeying Him. Your outer and your inner should be as one. There should be

compliance with no resistance, obedience with no rebellion, thankfulness with no ingratitude, mindfulness with no forgetfulness, and goodness with no evil. Your heart will have no salvation [*falāh*] as long as it contains anyone other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you were to bow down in prostration before Him for a thousand years, on hot coals, but turning in your heart toward someone other than Him, this would not benefit you at all. Nothing will come to the heart while it loves any other than its Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will not be blessed with His love until you blot out everything else. What good can it do you to abstain from things while you are attached to them in your heart? Do you not know that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) knows what is contained within the breasts of all mankind? Are you not ashamed to say with your tongue: "I have placed all my trust in Allāh [*tawakkaltu 'ala'llāh*]," when others apart from Him are within your heart?

O young man! Do not be deceived by the gentle forbearance [*hilm*] with which Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is treating you, for the force of His wrath [*baṭsh*] is terrible. Do not be deceived by these learned men who are ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). All their learning counts against them, not in their favor. They are learned in the laws [*ḥukm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), but ignorant of Allāh Himself (Almighty and Glorious is He). They give people orders which they themselves do not carry out, and forbid them to do things from which they themselves do not abstain. They summon others to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), but they flee from Him. They rebel and sin against Him flagrantly. I have their names recorded, written down and listed.

O Allāh, relent toward me and toward them. Present us all to your Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and to our father Abraham (peace be upon him). O Allāh, do not make us tyrants to one another. Make us benefactors to one another, and include us all in Your mercy. Āmīn.

Twelfth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 2nd of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O young man! Your wish [*irāda*] for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is not genuine. You are not really wishing for Him, because when someone claims to wish for the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He) while he is actually seeking something other than Him, his claim is null and void. Seekers of this world are very numerous. Seekers of the hereafter are comparatively few. Seekers of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), who are honest about their wish for Him, are the fewest of the few. In paucity and scarcity they are like the philosopher's stone [*al-kibrīt al-aḥmar*]. They are unique individuals of such extraordinariness and rarity that even one of them is seldom to be found. They are the strangers among the tribes. They are mines in the earth, in which they are monarchs. They are the prefects of cities and men [*shihān al-bilād wa'l-'ibād*]. Because of them the people are shielded from disaster. Because of them they receive rain. Because of them Allāh sends rain down from the sky, and because of them the earth puts forth vegetation.

In the first stage of their career they flee from mountain height to mountain height, from land to land, from ruin to ruin. As soon as they are recognized in a place they move on elsewhere. They cast everything behind their backs, and surrender the keys of this world to its people. They continue in this manner until fortresses are built around them, rivers flow into their hearts, and they are surrounded by troops in the service of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), each assigned to specific guard duty. Thus they are honored and protected, and are put in charge of the people. All of this is beyond their conscious minds.

At this point it becomes their obligatory duty [*farīda*] to make themselves available to the people. They come to be like physicians when the rest of the people are sick.

Woe unto you! You claim to be one of them, so what characteristic mark [*‘alāma*] of theirs do you possess? What is the mark of nearness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and of His grace? In what rank [*manzila*] are you in the sight of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and in what station [*maqām*]? What is your name [*ism*] and surname [*laqab*] in the Sovereignty Most High [*al-malakūt al-a‘lā*]? Why is your door locked every night? What of your food and drink, are they barely permissible [*mubāḥ*] or entirely lawful [*ḥalāl ṭalq*]? What do you take as your bedfellow: this world, the hereafter, or the close presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Who is your friend [*anīs*] in privacy? Who is your boon companion [*jalīs*] in public? Liar! Your friend in private is your lower self [*nafs*], your devil [*shaitān*], your passion [*hawā*], and contemplation of your worldly interests [*at-tafakkur fī dunyāka*]. In public your companions are those human devils who are your wicked mates and fellow gossip-mongers.

This is not something that comes about through idle chatter and unsubstantiated claims. What you have to say on this subject is nonsense that will do you no good. You must be calm and unobtrusive in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and give up bad behavior. If talking about this cannot be avoided altogether, your words should be devoted to the invocation of His blessings and speaking well of His people, not to making claims with your outer being when they have no substance in your heart. Everything external that is not matched by the inner is mere nonsense. Surely you have heard the saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

No fast is kept by one who goes on eating human flesh.

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has made it clear that fasting [*ṣiyām*] is not just a matter of giving up food, drink and other things that technically break the fast [*muḥṭirāt*], but also of giving up sins. Beware of backbiting [*ghība*], because it devours good deeds as fire devours wood. Successful people never make a habit of it, and those

who are known for it enjoy little respect. You must also beware of the lustful gaze [*an-naẓar bi'sh-shahwa*], because it plants the seeds of sin in your hearts, and its outcome is unworthy in this world and the next. Beware of the false oath [*al-yamīn al-kādhība*], because it leaves houses in ruins and takes away blessings both material and religious.

Woe unto you! You squander your material assets by swearing false oaths, and lose your religion as well. If you had any sense, you would realize that this is the very essence of loss. You say: “By Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), there is nothing in this city to compare with this piece of property, and no one else has anything like it! By Allāh, it is worth so-and-so much, and it cost me so-and-so much!” Everything you say is a lie, but then you bear false witness and swear by Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) that you are telling the truth. Blindness and age will soon come upon you. Correct your behavior—may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon you!—in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Those who do not discipline themselves to follow the rules of conduct [*ādāb*] prescribed by the sacred law [*sharʿ*], will be disciplined by the Fire [*an-nār*] on the Day of Resurrection [*yawm al-qiyāma*].

(Someone spoke up with the question: “If a person is guilty of these five bad habits, or some of them, do you declare his fast [*ṣawm*] and his ritual ablution [*wuḍūʿ*] invalid?” He said in reply: “His fast and his ritual ablution are not invalidated. These remarks are intended rather as an admonition, to give warning and alarm.”)

O young man! Perhaps when tomorrow comes you will be missing from the face of the earth, nowhere to be found. Or maybe at some other hour this will be so. What is this negligence? Your hearts are so hard! You are all rocks! I tell you, and others tell you too, but you are always the same way. The Qurʾān is recited to you. The traditions [*akhbār*] of the Messenger and the life stories [*siyar*] of our forebears [*al-awwālūn*] are read to you, but you pay no attention. You neither change course nor mend your ways. If someone is present in a place where warning is given, but he does not heed that warning, he is in the best of places but he is the worst of men.

O young man! Your contempt for the friends [*awliyāʾ*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) results from your having so little direct

knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You say: “These folk invite suspicion. Why don’t they share our way of life? Why don’t they sit in our company?” You talk like this because of your ignorance of your own self. When your self-awareness is slight, you have little awareness of what other people are worth. Inasmuch as you lack awareness of this world and its eventual outcome [*ʿāqiba*], you are ignorant of the value of the hereafter, and to the extent that you lack awareness of the hereafter, you are ignorant of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). O you who are so preoccupied with this world, you will soon experience loss and remorse in this world and the hereafter. Your regrets will show up clearly on the Day of Resurrection, the day of mutual cheating [*yawm at-taghābun*], the day of ignominious shame [*faḍīḥa*], the day of remorse and forfeiture [*an-nadāmāt wa’l-khusrān*]. Take stock of yourself before the advent of the hereafter. Do not delude yourself because of the tolerance [*ḥilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His generosity toward you. You are maintaining the worst possible state of affairs, through sins, mistakes and doing wrong to other people. Sin is the mailman [*barīd*] of unbelief [*kufr*], just as fever is the mailman of death. Be sure to repent before death, before the arrival of the angel who is entrusted with the collecting of spirits [*arwāḥ*].

O young men! Repent! Can you not see how the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is trying you with misfortune so that you may repent, while you do not comprehend, and persist in disobeying Him? Only a few individuals are made to suffer tribulation in this day and age, but they experience it as an affliction [*niqma*], not as a blessing [*niʿma*]; as a punishment for sins, not as a promotion in spiritual rank and grace [*ziyāda fi’l-darajāt wa’l-karāmāt*]. The people [of the Lord] are put to the test in order to elevate their rank in the presence of their King. They bear with Him patiently, because they seek His countenance. When this is fully accomplished by them, they have achieved dominion [*mulk*]. But when this is not fully accomplished, they firmly believe that they are in damnation [*hulk*].

O Allāh, no damnation! We beg you to let us be near to You, and behold You in this world and the hereafter; in this world with our hearts and in the hereafter with our eyes.

O my people! Do not despair of the refreshment [*rawḥ*] and relief [*faraj*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for this is near at hand. Do not despair, because the Maker [*aṣ-Ṣāniʿ*] is Allāh.

You do not know; it may be that Allāh will afterward bring some new thing to pass. (65:1)

Do not run away from tribulation [*balāʾ*], because tribulation borne with patience is the basis of everything good. The foundation of Prophetship [*nubūwa*], of Messengership [*risāla*], of saintship [*wilāya*], of direct knowledge [*maʿrifā*] and of love [*maḥabbā*], is surely tribulation. So if you have not borne tribulation with patience, you have no foundation. A building cannot last without a foundation. Have you ever seen a house standing firm on top of a garbage dump? You only flee from tribulation and misfortunes because you feel no pressing need for saintship, direct knowledge and the nearness of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Be patient, and work until you can ascend with your heart [*qalb*], your innermost being [*sirr*] and your spirit [*rūḥ*] to the gate of nearness to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The *ʿulamāʾ* [learned scholars], the *awliyāʾ* [saints] and the *abdāl* [spiritual deputies] are the heirs of the Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*]. The Prophets are the brokers [*samāsira*], and these others are their advertising agents [*munādūn*].

The believer [*muʾmin*] is afraid of none but Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and looks in hope to none but Him, for he has been given courage in his heart and his innermost being. How can the hearts of believers fail to be encouraged by Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), since He has made them ascend to Him? Their hearts [*qulūb*] are always with Him, while their outer form [*qālab*] is here on the earth. As Allāh (Exalted is He) has said:

And in Our sight they are surely of the chosen, the excellent. (38:47)

They are chosen over their own relatives and their contemporaries. Their inner natures [*maʿānī*] are marked with distinction, and their outer frames [*mabānī*] are enlightened. This is why they have detached themselves from people and abstained from ordinary habits. They have forged ahead, and the grass has sprung up to cover their tracks. They can no longer turn back. They have grown accustomed to solitude.

They prefer the desert, the shores of the oceans, the open spaces and the wastelands, not civilization. They eat the herbs and drink from the pools to be found in the deserts. They become like the beasts of the wild.

In this situation, He draws their hearts near to Him and delights them with His company. He lodges their frames with the frames of the Messengers [*mursalūn*], the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*] and the martyrs [*shuhadā'*], and He lodges their inner natures with Himself. They always stand ready to serve, all night and all day, in private. Such is the comfort of those who yearn, and the pleasure of those who seek intimacy with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O young man! Sweetness is inevitably paired with bitterness, righteousness [*ṣalāh*] with corruption [*fasād*], and turbulence [*kadar*] with serenity [*ṣafā'*]. If you wish for total serenity, therefore, you must detach your heart from creatures and connect it to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must part company with this world. Leave your family and entrust them to the safekeeping of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Strip your heart bare of everything, approach the door of the hereafter and then enter it. If you do not find your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in there, come out of it and flee in quest of nearness to Him. When you find Him, you will find complete serenity in His presence. What has the lover [*muḥibb*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to do with anything other than Him? Paradise is the home of those who seek spiritual status [*darajāt*], the home of merchants who have traded this world for it. This is why Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And therein is all that selves [*anfus*] desire and eyes delight in. (43:71)

He does not mention the heart [*qalb*]. He does not mention the innermost being [*sirr*]. He does not mention spiritual content [*ma' nā*]. Paradise belongs to upright keepers of the fast, to those who renounce and abstain from the desires and pleasures of the flesh. They have traded one kind of food for another kind of food, a garden for a garden, an abode for an abode.

From you I want deeds without talk. The gnostic [*ʿārif*] who works for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is an anvil that gets hammered on, but never says a word; a plot of land that gets trodden

over, changed and altered, but stays quite dumb. The [Lord's] people see none other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and none but Him do they hear. They have an inner core [*janān*] but no tongue [*lisān*]. They become extinct [*fānūn*] to themselves and to others, and they remain in this condition. When Allāh wishes, He resurrects them [*ansharahum*]. He makes the inner core a tongue, as if they were drugged [*mubannajūn*]. The King takes them to Himself with the hand of His compassion [*raʿfa*] and mercy [*rahma*]. He shapes them for Himself and creates them for Himself, not for any other. He fashions them for Himself as He fashioned Moses (peace be upon him), for as He told him: "I have fashioned you for Myself" (20:41).

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (42:11).

He brings into being a rest with no weariness, a friendship with no alienation, a blessing with no pain, a joy with no unpleasantness, a sweetness with no bitterness, a dominion with no damnation.

There, protection belongs only to Allāh, the True. (18:44)

When someone has attained this state, comfort [*rāḥa*] is made available to him here and now. In the condition you are in, however, you will not find comfort in this world, because it is the abode of turbulence, the abode of disasters. You are bound to leave it, so you should expel it from your heart and from your hand. If you cannot manage this, then keep it in your hand, but expel it from your heart. Then, when you get stronger, let it go from your hand and give it to the poor. The needy are the dependents of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Besides, what is meant for you will not pass you by; it is bound reach you whether you be rich or poor, an ascetic [*ṣāhid*] or one with an appetite for things [*rāghib*].

The central point is the soundness and purity of your heart and your innermost being, both of which become pure through the acquisition of knowledge, its application in practice, sincerity in that practice, and honesty in seeking the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O young man! Have you not heard the saying: "Study jurisprudence, then retire [*tafaqqah thumma-ʿtazil*]?" Study the external jurisprudence [*al-fiqh aẓ-ảāhir*], then retire to the inner jurisprudence [*al-fiqh al-bāṭin*].

Follow this outer practice until it brings you close to a knowledge you have not been applying. This outer knowledge is the light of the outer being, and the inner is the light of the inner. It is a light [*ḍiyā'*] between you and your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whenever you put your knowledge into practice, your path [*ṭarīq*] to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is shortened, the door between you and Him is widened, and He raises the panel of the door that is specially for you.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Thirteenth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 4th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O young man! Give priority to the hereafter over this world, because you will then gain both of them together. If you give this world priority over the hereafter, you will lose both of them together, as your punishment for having preoccupied yourself with something you were not put in charge of. If you do not concern yourself with this world, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will assist you to cope with it. He will provide you with the facility [*tawfiq*] and the opportunity to take from it, and when you do take something from it, it will be with His blessing [*baraka*].

The believer [*mu'min*] works for both his worldly and his otherworldly interests. For his worldly efforts he receives to the extent of his need. He is satisfied with the equivalent of a traveler's provisions; he does not obtain a great deal. The ignorant fool [*jāhil*] is wholly concerned with this world. The ascetic [*ʿāzif*] is wholly concerned with the hereafter and then the Master.

If you happen to have acquired a whole loaf of this world, and your lower self [*nafs*] is fighting for control and your desires are making demands, then is the time to look after those who cannot get even a slice. There is no salvation [*falāh*] for you, until you despise your lower self and take up arms against it on the side of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The champions of truth [*aş-şiddiqūn*] can recognize one another. Each one of them picks up the scent of acceptance and truthfulness [*şidq*] from the another. O you who turn away from the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He) and from the champions of truth among

His servants, devoting yourselves to fellow creatures and associating with them, how long will your devotion to them last? What good can they do you? They have no power to harm or benefit, to give or to withhold. There is no difference between them and inanimate objects as far as harm and benefit are concerned. The King [*al-Malik*] is One. The Injurer [*ad-Dārr*] is One. The Benefactor [*an-Nāfi'*] is One. The Mover [*al-Muḥarrrik*] and the Bringer-to-Rest [*al-Musakkin*] is One. The Controller [*al-Musallit*] is One. The Subjugator [*al-Musakhkhir*] is One. The Giver [*al-Mu'tī*] is One. The Withholder [*al-Māni'*] is One. The Creator [*al-Khāliq*] and the Sustainer [*ar-Rāziq*] is Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is the Everlasting from All Eternity to All Eternity [*al-Qadīm al-Azālī al-Abadī*]. He is Existent [*Mawjūd*] before the creation, before your fathers and your mothers and your rich folk. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, of all they contain and of what lies between them.

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (42:11)

How unfortunate for you, O creatures of Allāh, that you do not really know your Creator! If there would be something to my credit with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) at the Resurrection, I would surely bear the burdens of you all, from the first of you to the last of you. O reciter of the Qur'ān [*muqri'*], recite to me alone, away from the people of the heavens and the earth!

Whenever someone puts his knowledge into practice, it becomes a doorway between him and Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), through which his heart enters into His presence. As for you, O learned one, you are preoccupied with idle gossip and accumulating wealth, instead of putting your knowledge into practice, so you will surely possess only the outer form [*ṣūra*] of it, without the inner content [*ma'nā*]. When Allāh (Exalted is He) wishes one of His servants well, He teaches him, then He inspires him [*alhamahu*] to practice [what he has learned] and to do so with sincere devotion [*ikhhlās*]. He draws him close and brings him near to Himself, informs him and instructs him in the knowledge of the heart and the innermost being, singling him out for special favor. He selects him as He selected Moses (peace be upon him), to whom He said:

I have fashioned you for Myself. (20:41)

“Not for anything other than Me. Not for passions and pleasures and vanities. Not for the earth and not for the heavens. Not for Paradise and not for the Fire [of Hell]. Not for dominion [*mulk*] and not for damnation [*hulk*]. Nothing shall keep you from Me. No other interest shall hold your attention apart from Me. No image [*ṣūra*] shall distract you from Me, and no created object [*khalīqa*] shall block you off from Me. No desire of the flesh [*shahwa*] shall satisfy you as a substitute for Me.”

O young man! Do not despair of the mercy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) because of any sin you have committed, but wash away the dirt from the garment of your religion [*dīn*] with the water of repentance [*tawba*], of sustained and sincere repentance. Then perfume and disinfect that garment with the fragrance of direct experience [*maʿrifa*]. Beware of this situation you are in at present, because whichever way you turn there are beasts of prey all around you, and harmful influences are at work upon you. Extricate yourself from it, and restore your heart to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not live to suit your natural impulses [*tabʿ*], your lust [*shahwa*] and your passion [*hawā*], but to meet the standards of two impartial witnesses [*shāhidān ʿadlān*], namely the Book [of Allāh] and the Sunna [of the Prophet]. Then look for two other witnesses, namely your heart and the working [*fiʿl*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). If the Book, the Sunna and your heart have given you permission, wait for the fourth, meaning the working of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not be like one who gathers wood at night, who gathers without knowing what he may be picking up. [Wait] for it to be Creator-and-creature [*al-Khāliq waʾl-khalq*]. This is not something that comes with self-flattery, wishful thinking, affectation and artificiality. Rather is it something that resides within the breast [*ṣadr*], and is confirmed by work [*ʿamal*]. Which work? The work that is done for the sake of Allāh (Exalted is He).

O young man! Good health lies in giving up the quest for good health. Affluence lies in giving up the quest for affluence. The remedy lies in giving up the quest for the remedy. The whole of the remedy consists in submission [*taslīm*] to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), in cutting material ties [*asbāb*] and repudiating overlords [*arbāb*] as

far as your heart is concerned. The remedy lies in affirmation of the Oneness of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with the heart, not with the tongue alone. The affirmation of Oneness [*tawhīd*] and abstinence [*zuhd*] are not incumbent on the body and the tongue. The affirmation of Oneness must be in the heart. Abstinence must be in the heart. Pious devotion [*taqwā*] must be in the heart. Direct experience [*maʿrifa*] must be in the heart. Knowledge [*ʿilm*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) must be in the heart. Love [*maḥabba*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) must be in the heart, and nearness [*qurb*] to Him must be in the heart.

Be sensible. Do not be foolish. Do not behave artificially or in an affected manner. Your present condition is one of foolishness, artificiality, affectation, falsehood, pretense and hypocrisy. Your sole concern is getting people to notice you. Do you not realize that every step you take with your heart toward creatures is a step away from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? You claim to be a seeker of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), when you are really a seeker of creatures. Your likeness is that of someone who says he wishes to proceed to Mecca, then goes off in the direction of Khurāsān and so gets farther away from Mecca. You claim that your heart has become detached from creatures, when you actually fear them and pin your hopes on them. Your outer show [*ẓāhir*] is abstinence, but your inner reality [*bāṭin*] is appetite [*raghba*]. Your outer show is the Truth [*al-Ḥaqq*], but your inner reality is the creation [*al-khalq*].

This business is not accomplished by wagging the tongue. This state of being [*ḥāla*] has no room in it for creatures, for this world or the hereafter, or for anything at all apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is Single [*wāḥid*] and He accepts only what is single. He is Single and accepts no partner, for He is in charge of your business. You must accept what you are told. Creatures are powerless to cause you injury or bring you benefit; in such matters they are merely instruments of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He may deal with you and with them as He sees fit. The pen has run dry on Allāh's knowledge (Almighty and Glorious is He) of what is due to you and what you owe.

The righteous affirmers of Unity [*al-muwaḥḥidūn aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*] are Allāh's evidence [*ḥujja*] against the rest of His creatures. Some of them divest

themselves of this world both outwardly and inwardly, while some of them divest themselves of it only insofar as their inner is concerned. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) sees no trace of it on their inner beings. These are the pure hearts [*al-qulūb aṣ-ṣāfiya*]. When someone is capable of this, he is granted the dominion of creatures. He is the valiant hero [*ash-shujāʿ al-batal*]. The hero is he who purifies his heart of all that is apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and stands at His gate with the sword [*saif*] of the affirmation of Unity and the finely wrought blade [*ṣamṣāma*] of the sacred law [*sharʿ*], allowing no created thing to enter into His presence. He connects his heart [*qalb*] to the Transformer of hearts [*Muqallib al-qulūb*].

The sacred law gives training to the outer. The affirmation of Unity and gnosis [*maʿrifa*] give training to the inner. Hey you there! Nothing comes out of “they said..., and we said...” You say: “This is unlawful [*ḥarām*],” yet you are committing it. You say: “This is lawful [*ḥalāl*],” yet you neither do it nor apply it. You are stupidity within stupidity. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Woe to the ignorant person one time, and to the learned person seven times.

One woe to the ignorant person for not knowing, and woe to this scholar seven times over, because he knows and does not act [*ʿalima wa-mā ʿamila*]. The blessedness [*baraka*] of knowledge is taken away from him, while its value as evidence [*ḥujja*] against him remains. You must study and then practice. Then withdraw into your private space [*khalwa*] away from creatures, and devote yourself to the love [*maḥabba*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you have genuinely achieved such solitary devotion and love, He will draw you toward Himself, bring you close to Himself and absorb you into Himself. Then, if Allāh so wishes, He will make you famous and put you on public display, and send you back to fulfill your destiny [*aqṣām*]. He will give orders to the wind of His predestination [*sābiqa*] and His foreknowledge [*ʿilm*] concerning you, so it will blow against the walls of your private place and throw them down. He will make your business known to His creatures, so you will be among them on His account, not on your own account. You will receive your allotted shares [*aqṣām*] in full, but free from the bad influences of the self [*nafs*], natural

impulse [*ṭabʿ*] and desire [*hawā*]. He will return you to [the fulfillment of] your destiny so that the principle [*qānūn*] of His foreknowledge concerning you shall not be annulled. You will experience all that has been allotted to you, while your heart remains with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Hear and become aware, O ignorant ones, of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His saints [*awliyāʾ*]. O you who disparage the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His saints! The truth is the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and falsehood is you, O creatures. The truth [*al-ḥaqq*] resides in the hearts [*qulūb*], the innermost beings [*asrār*] and the spiritual contents [*maʿānī*], while falsehood [*al-bāṭil*] resides in the lower selves [*nufūs*], the passions [*ahwiyā*], the natural impulses [*ṭibāʿ*], the habitual modes of behavior [*ʿādāt*], the ways of the world and all that is apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

This heart cannot prosper until it is connected to the close presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), the Everlasting from All Eternity [*al-Qadīm al-Azālī*], the Enduring for All Eternity [*ad-Dāʾim al-Abadī*]. Do not try to compete, O hypocrite, for you have nothing better than this. You are the slave [*ʿabd*] of your bread and butter and your candies, of your clothes and your horse and your worldly authority. The sincere heart [*al-qalb aṣ-ṣādiq*] travels away from creatures toward the Creator. When it sees things along the way, it salutes them and passes by.

Those men of learning who put their learning into practice [*al-ʿulamāʾ al-ʿāmilūna bi-ʿilmihim*] are the deputies of the venerable forefathers [*nuwwāb as-salaf*]. They are the heirs [*waratha*] of the Prophets [*al-anbiyāʾ*] and the remnants of the worthy successors [*al-khalaḥ*]. They are paraded before these noble predecessors, who command them to build constructively in the city [*madīna*] of the sacred law [*sharʿ*], and forbid them to let it go to ruin. They shall be assembled on the Day of Resurrection, they and the Prophets (peace be upon them) together, to receive their reward in full from their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

As for the scholar who does not put his knowledge into practice, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has compared him to a donkey, for He has said:

Their likeness is as the likeness of a donkey carrying tomes. (62:5)

The “tomes” [*asfār*] are the books of knowledge. Can a donkey derive any benefit from such books? It gets nothing from them but a weary burden and fatigue. When a person acquires more knowledge, he must also acquire more fear of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and greater obedience to Him. O you who lay claim to knowledge, where is your connection with the fear of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Where are your caution and your dread? Where is your acknowledgment of your sins? Where is your link with the light in the darkness, through obedience to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Where is your self-discipline, your struggle with the self and your hostility against it on the side of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? The only things you aspire to are the robe and the turban, food and sexual intercourse, houses and shops, spending time with people and enjoying their company. Turn your attention away from all of these things, because if any share in them is destined for you, it will come to you in its own good time. Meanwhile, your heart can be relieved of the strain of anticipation and the burden of greed, residing with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). So why exhaust yourself over something that requires no effort?

O young man! Your seclusion [from the world] is corrupt, not genuine. It is polluted, not purified. What am I to do with you? In your heart there is no genuine affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*], no true sincerity [*ikhhlās*]. O sleepy ones who are not sleepily neglected! O rejecters who are not rejected! O forgetful ones who are not forgotten! O abandoners who are not abandoned! O you who are ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and those who came in earlier or later times, you are like sawn-off lengths of wood that are fit for no useful purpose!

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Fourteenth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 7th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O hypocrite, may Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) purify the earth of you! Your hypocrisy will not be satisfied until your backbiting of the scholars [*'ulamā'*], the saints [*awliyā'*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] amounts to actually devouring their flesh. You and your hypocritical brethren alike will very soon have worms devouring your tongues and your flesh, as they dismember you and carve you into little pieces. The earth will embrace you, then crush you and transform you.

There is no salvation [*falāḥ*] for one who does not think well of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His righteous servants, and behave toward them with humble modesty. Why do you not approach them with humility, when they are the chiefs [*ru'asā'*] and leaders [*umarā'*]? Who are you in relation to them? The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has entrusted to them the authority to untie and to bind [*al-ḥall wa'r-rabt*]. Because of them the rain falls from the sky and the earth produces crops. All creatures are their subjects [*ra'iyya*]. Each of them is like a mountain that is neither shaken nor moved by the winds of disasters and calamities. They do not budge from the places of their affirmation of Oneness [*tawḥīd*] and their contentment [*riḍā*] with their Master (Almighty and Glorious is He) to go off seeking for themselves and for others.

Repent to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), apologize to Him, confess your sins between you and Him, and offer up to Him your humble entreaties. What lies in front of you? If you really knew, you would not be in the state you are in now. Behave correctly in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), as your

predecessors used to behave. In comparison with them, you are passive homosexuals [*makhānīth*] and women. Your courage [*shajāʿa*] lies in doing what you are told to do by your lower selves, your passions and your natural impulses. Where religion [*dīn*] is concerned, courage lies in discharging the rights [*huqūq*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Do not belittle the words of the wise and the learned, because their speech is a remedy and their words are the fruit of the revelation [*wahy*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). There is no Prophet physically present in your midst so you could follow him, but if you follow those followers of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) who really do follow him, then it is just as if you were following him directly. When you look at them, it is as if you were looking at him. Befriend those scholars who are truly devout [*muttaqūn*], because your friendship [*ṣuhba*] with them will be a blessing [*baraka*] for you. Do not befriend those scholars who do not put their knowledge into practice, because your friendship with them will have a bad influence on you. If you befriend someone who is senior to you in pious devotion [*taqwā*] and learning, your friendship with him will be a blessing for you, but if you befriend someone who is senior to you in age, although he possesses neither piety nor learning, your friendship with him will have a bad influence on you. Work for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and do not work for the sake of anyone other than Him. Give things up for His sake, and do not give things up for the sake of anyone other than Him. To work for the sake of anyone other than Him is unbelief [*kufr*], and giving things up for the sake of anyone other than Him is hypocritical pretense [*riyāʾ*]. To be unaware of this, and not to act appropriately in this regard, is to be in a state of delusion. Death will come very soon to put a stop to your delusion.

Woe unto you! Make contact with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and cut off contact with all others as far as your heart is concerned. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Connect what is between you and your Lord, so that you may prosper.

Purify the connection between you and your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) by safeguarding the hearts of the righteous [*qulūb aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*].

O young man! If there is any difference in your attitude toward people who approach you, depending on whether they are rich or poor, there is no salvation [*falāḥ*] for you. You should receive the patient poor with respectful hospitality, regard them as a blessing, and rejoice in the opportunity to meet them and sit in their company. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The patient poor [*al-fuqarā' aṣ-ṣubbar*] are the boon companions of the All-Merciful [*ar-Raḥmān*] on the Day of Resurrection.

Today they are His boon companions [*julasā'*] in their hearts, tomorrow in their physical bodies. They are those whose hearts have renounced this world and spurned its superficial glamor. They have preferred their poverty to their affluence, and have endured it with patience. When they have completed this process of development, the hereafter proposes to them and offers itself to them in marriage, so they contract a union with it. But when it comes to them, they see that it is not their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so they ask for an annulment, turn the backs of their hearts on it, and run away from it. They feel ashamed before the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) for having settled for any other than Him, for trusting the upstart [*muḥdath*] and forming a close relationship with it, for offering up to it their good and virtuous deeds and all their acts of obedient worship. Then they fly toward Him on the wings of their sincere faith [*ṣidq*], in quest of their Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). They leave the cage behind. They escape from the cages of their existence [*wujūd*] and fly toward the Cause of their existence [*Mūjid*]. They seek the Companion Most High [*ar-Rafīq al-ʿAlī*]. They seek the First [*al-Awwal*] and the Last [*al-Ākhir*], the Outer [*aṣ-Ṣāḥir*] and the Inner [*al-Bāṭin*]. They make for the castle [*burj*] of His nearness. They come to be among those concerning whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And in Our sight they are surely of the chosen, the excellent. (38:47)

[Meaning:] "Their hearts are with Us, their preoccupation is with Us, and their spiritual contents [*maʿānī*] are with Us. The innermost core of their being [*albāb*] is with us in this world and the hereafter."

When this is fully accomplished by the people [of the Lord], neither this world nor the hereafter has any importance for them. The heavens

and the earth and everything between them fade into insignificance in comparison with their hearts and their innermost beings [*asrār*]. He makes them extinct to any but Himself, and makes them exist in Him. Then, if they still have allotted shares in this world, He restores them to their humanity [*ādamiyya*], to their human condition [*bashariyya*], to fulfill their destinies [*aqsām*], so that there shall be no alteration of the [divine] foreknowledge [*‘ilm*], preordination [*sābiqa*] and decree [*qadā’*]. Thus they behave correctly in relation to the knowledge of Allāh, His decree and His predestination [*qadar*]. They receive what they are given in a spirit of abstinence and resignation, not selfishly, passionately and willfully. With them, the external law [*al-ḥukm aẓ-ẓāhir*] is faithfully observed under all circumstances. They are not miserly in worldly dealings with people. If they could, they would bring them all close to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). No item of things created and temporal retains an atom’s weight in their hearts.

As long as you stay with this world, you have no connection with the hereafter. As long as you stay with the hereafter, you have no connection with the Master [*al-Mawlā*]. Be an active practitioner [*‘āmil*]. Do not feign ignorance. You are one of those whom Allāh has allowed to go knowingly astray.

Getting in touch with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is partly a matter of putting the poor in touch with some of your possessions. Do you not realize that charity [*ṣadaqa*] is a transaction [*mu‘āmalā*] with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), who is both Rich [*Ghanī*] and Generous [*Karīm*]? And does one lose in doing business with the rich and generous? Spend one speck of dust for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and He will give you a mountain. Spend one drop of water, and He will give you an ocean. In this world and also in the hereafter, He will give you your recompense and your reward in full.

O my people! If you do business with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) your crops will thrive, your rivers will flow, and your trees will put forth leaves and branches and fruit. Command what is right and proper [*al-ma‘rūf*], and forbid what is wrong and improper [*al-munkar*]. Help the religion [*dīn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to be victorious, and fight against its foes. The truly loyal friend [*aṣ-ṣiddīq*] is one whom you befriend for good. His faithful friendship

[*ṣadāqa*] is always there, in private and in public, in happiness and misfortune, in hardship and ease.

Seek whatever you need from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), not from His creatures. Even though dealing with creatures cannot be avoided, you should enter the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) with your hearts, because He will inspire you [*yulhimukum*] to go looking in a particular direction. Then, whether what you need is withheld or granted, this will be His doing, not theirs. The people [of the Lord] have emptied their hearts of anxiety over the provision of their needs. They realize that they are destined to receive them at predetermined times, so they give up the search for them and take up permanent residence at the gate of their King. They lack nothing, through the gracious favor of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His nearness and His knowledge. Then, when they have achieved this completely, they become the people's point of focus [*qibla*] and petitioners [*khuṭabā'*] on their behalf in gaining admission to their King. They take them to Him by the hands of their hearts, and try to persuade Him to grant them robes of acceptance and favor.

A certain wise Shaikh (may the mercy of Allāh the Exalted be upon him) is reported as having said: "Those servants [*ibād*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) whose servitude [*ubūdiyya*] to Him has become real, seek nothing from Him, whether of this world or of the hereafter. All they seek from Him is Himself and nothing else. O Allāh, guide all creatures to this gate of Yours! I offer my request and leave the rest to You." This prayer is all-embracing, and will be rewarded. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) does with His creatures whatsoever He will. When the heart is sound, it is filled with mercy and compassion for all creatures.

Another wise Shaikh (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: "Those who do good are many, but sins are forsaken only by the champions of truth [*aṣ-ṣiddiqūn*]."

The champion of truth forsakes both major sins [*kabā'ir*] and minor offenses [*ṣaghā'ir*], then he refines his piety [*wara'*] by giving up the desires of the flesh [*shahawāt*], then he abstains from things that are ordinarily permissible [*al-mubāḥ al-mushtarak*] and seeks what is unconditionally lawful [*al-ḥalāl al-muṭlaq*].

The champion of truth constantly devotes the greater part of his days and his nights to the service [*‘ibāda*] of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He goes beyond the ordinary customs [*‘awā’id*] of people, so the customary order of things [*al-‘āda*] will certainly be rearranged for his benefit. He will receive provision from sources he could never imagine, which he will be offered and ordered to accept. Things will be his free and clear, because for so long he was deprived. His feelings of need were broken in his breast, and he bore his disappointments with patience. He suffered rejection in all his situations. He used to pray, but his prayers would go unanswered. He used to ask, but his request would not be granted. He used to offer thanks, but would only get more of what he had to complain of. He would seek relief, but never found it. He would do his pious duty, but never saw a way out of his difficulties. He would affirm the Divine Unity and do his work sincerely, but never experienced nearness to the One for whose sake he was working, as if he were neither a believer [*mu’min*] nor a monotheist [*muwahhid*]. Yet in spite of all this, he was always polite and patient in the face of these provocations. He knew that his patience was a remedy for his heart, and a means by which to calm it and bring it nearer [to the Lord]. He knew that good would come to him after this testing experience [*ikhtibār*], because this test would distinguish the believer from the hypocrite, the monotheist from the polytheist [*mushrik*], the sincere man [*mukhlis*] from the pretender [*murā’i*], the courageous hero from the coward, the steadfast from the fickle, the patient from the impatient, the truthful from the false, the honest man from the liar, the lover from the hater, and the faithful follower [*muttabi’*] from the heretical innovator [*mubtadi’*].

Hear the words of one of the wise (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him), who said: “Be in this world like one who licks his wounds and takes his bitter medicine patiently, hoping the affliction will pass away.” All misfortunes and sicknesses are due to your idolatrous association [*shirk*] with creatures, and your regarding them as the source of injury and benefit, of giving and withholding. The whole remedy for misfortune, the only way to get rid of it, lies in the departure of creatures from your heart, in the firmness of your resolve when the decrees of destiny are handed down, in your not seeking to lead the people and lord it over them, in the total devotion of your heart to your Lord (Almighty

and Glorious is He), the pure dedication of your innermost being [*sirr*] to Him, and the loftiness of your aspiration toward Him.

When this becomes real for you, your heart will raised up to join the ranks of the Prophets [*an-nabiyyūn*], the Messengers [*al-mursalūn*], the martyrs [*ash-shuhadā'*], the righteous [*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*], and the angels brought near [*al-malā'ika al-muqarrabūn*]. As long as it lasts for you, you will be magnified, glorified, exalted, promoted, and entrusted with authority and command. You will receive what you are to receive. You will be entrusted with what is to be entrusted to you. You will be given what you are to be given. The one who is deprived is he who is deprived of hearing these words, of faith [*īmān*] in them, and of respect for those to whom they apply.

O you who are too preoccupied with your livelihoods to give me your attention! The [true] livelihood is with me. The profits are with me. The goods of the hereafter are with me. I am sometimes an advertising agent [*munāḍin*], at other times a broker [*simsār*], and the owner of the goods at yet another time. I give everything its due. If I come by something from the hereafter, I do not consume it all by myself, because a generous person does not eat alone. You will never find any miserliness in anyone who has become aware of the generosity of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whenever someone has come to know Allāh (Exalted is He) by experience, everything apart from Him seems trivial in his sight. Miserliness is from the self, and the self [*nafs*] of one who knows from real experience [*ʿarīf*] is dead in comparison with the selves of ordinary people. It is tranquil [*muṭma'inna*], trusting in the promise [*wa'd*] of Allāh (Exalted is He), fearful of His threat [*wa'id*].

O Allāh, grant us the blessings you have bestowed upon Your people, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Fifteenth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, on Sunday the 9th of Dhu'l-Qa'ḍa, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The believer [*mu'min*] takes his rations, while the unbeliever [*kāfir*] takes his pleasure. The believer takes his rations because he is on a journey. He is content to use a tiny fraction of what he owns, while investing the greater part in the hereafter. Apart from giving himself a traveler's allowance, based on what he can carry, he keeps all his property in the hereafter. His heart and his aspirations [*himma*] are all there. His heart is concentrated there, indifferent to this world. He forwards all the merit of his acts of worship to the hereafter, not to this world and those who belong to it. If he has some tasty food, he donates it to the poor, knowing that in the hereafter he will have something even better to eat. The goal of the aspiration [*himma*] of the experienced [*ʿarif*] and learned [*ʿālim*] believer is the door of his nearness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and that his heart should get there in this world, before the hereafter. Nearness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the goal of the steps taken by the heart and the secret journey of the innermost being.

I see you [going through the motions of the *ṣalāt*-prayer:] standing upright [*qiyām*], sitting on your heels [*qu'ūd*], bowing from the waist [*rukū'*], and falling in prostration [*sujūd*], as you lose sleep in weary vigil. But your heart never moves from its place, never leaves the home of its being, and never changes its familiar habits. Be honest in your quest for your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He); your honesty [*ṣidq*] may enable you to dispense with a lot of exhausting effort. Peck open the egg of your being with the beak of your honesty, and knock down the walls of your devotion and attachment to creatures with the pickaxes of sincerity [*ikhhlāṣ*] and your affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*]. Break the

cage of your appetite for things with the hand of your abstinence from them. Fly away with your heart until you alight on the shore of the ocean of your nearness to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then the sailor of Preordination [*as-sābiqa*] will come to you. He will have with him the ship of Providence [*al-‘ināya*], and so he will take you across to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

This world is an ocean, and your faith [*īmān*] is its ship. This is why Luqmān the Wise [*al-ḥakīm*] (may Allāh’s mercy be upon him) said: “O my dear son, this world is an ocean. Faith is the ship. The sailor is your obedient worship [*tā‘āt*]. The shore is the hereafter.”

O you who persist in sinful disobedience! Coming to you very soon are blindness and deafness, old age and poverty, and the hardening of people’s hearts toward you. Your possessions will all be gone because of losses, confiscations [*muṣādarāt*] and thefts. Be sensible. Repent to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not make idols of your possessions and put your trust in them. Do not become attached to them. Evict them from your hearts. Keep them in your houses and your pockets, and with your servants [*ghilmān*] and your agents [*wukalā’*]. Be ready for death. Diminish your appetite and reduce your expectations.

Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “The experienced believer [*al-mu’min al-‘arīf*] seeks nothing of this world and nothing of the hereafter from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). All he seeks from his Master is his Master [*innamā yaṭlubu min Mawlāhu Mawlāhu*].”

O young man! Return with your heart to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). One who is repentant [*tā‘ib*] to Allāh is one who is returning [*rājī’*] to Him, and His words (Almighty and Glorious is He): “Repent unto your Lord,” (39:54) i.e., “Return to your Lord,” mean: “Turn back and surrender everything to Him.” Surrender your own selves to Him, and cast them down in submission before His decree, His destiny, His commandment, His prohibition and His transformative workings [*taqlībāt*]. Cast your hearts down in submission before Him, without tongues, without hands, without legs, without eyes, without “How?”, without “Why?”, without argument and without contradiction, but rather with agreement and confirmation. Say: “The commandment [*al-amr*] is true. Destiny [*al-qadar*] is true. Preordination [*as-sābiqa*] is true.”

If you are like this, your hearts will surely be repentant unto Him and witness Him directly. They will not take a liking to anything, but rather feel distaste for everything beneath the heavenly Throne [*al-‘arsh*] down to the surface of the earth. They will flee from all created things, and remain separate and cut off from all temporal phenomena [*muḥdathāt*].

No one knows how to behave correctly with the Shaikhs unless he has served them and become aware of some of the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] they experience with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The people [of the Lord] have learned to treat praise and blame like summer and winter, like night and day. They regard them both as from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), because no one is capable of bringing them about except Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). When this has become real for them, therefore, they do not place their confidence in those who praise them, nor do they fight with their critics, and they pay no attention to them. Their hearts have been emptied of both love and hate for creatures. They neither love nor hate, but rather feel compassion.

What benefit can you derive from knowledge without sincere belief [*ṣidq*], since Allāh may allow you to go knowingly astray? You acquire learning and do the *ṣalāt*-prayers and keep the fast, all for the sake of people, to get them to be well disposed toward you, to lavish their goods on you, and to sing your praises in their homes and their social gatherings. Suppose you do get all this from them; when death comes to you, and torment and anguish and terror, you will be cut off from them and they will do nothing to help you. The goods you got from them will be consumed by others, while you must suffer punishment and face the final reckoning. O deserter! O outcast! You are one of those who are “toiling, weary” (88:3) in this world, and weary tomorrow in the Fire [of Hell].

Worshipful service [*‘ibāda*] is a skilled craft, and its experts are the saints [*al-awliyā’*] and the sincere *Abdāl* [spiritual deputies] who are brought close to the presence of the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He). Those scholars who put their knowledge into practice are the deputies [*nuwwāb*] of Allāh upon His earth, and of His Envoys [*rusul*]; they are the heirs of the Prophets [*al-anbiyā’*] and the Messenger [*al-mursalūn*]. Not you, O deluded fools, O you who are preoccupied

with tongue-wagging and legalistic knowledge [*fiqh*] of the outer [*aẓ-ẓāhir*], accompanied by ignorance of the inner [*al-bāṭin*].

O young man! You do not amount to anything. Islām [submission to the will of Allāh] has not become a fact for you. Islām is the foundation upon which everything is built. The profession of faith [*ash-shahāda*] has not become completely real for you. You say: “There is no god but Allāh [*lā ilāha illa’llāh*],” but you are lying. In your heart there is a whole collection of gods [*āliha*]. Your fears of your ruler [*sulṭān*] and of your local governor [*wālī*] are gods. Your reliance on your earned income and your profit, on your power and your strength, on your hearing and your sight and your energy, all these are gods. Your ways of viewing creatures as the source of injury and benefit, of giving and withholding, are also gods. Many people talk about these things with their hearts, while making it appear that they are talking about the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He). Their mentioning the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He) has become a habit for their tongues, not for their hearts. When they are challenged on this score, they fly into a rage and say: “How can such things be said of us? Are we not Muslims?” Tomorrow the shameful facts will be disclosed, and things kept hidden will be revealed.

Woe unto you! When you say: “There is no god [*lā ilāha*],” it is an absolute negation [*nafy kullī*], and “except Allāh [*illa’llāh*]” is an absolute affirmation [*ithbāt kullī*]. You are asserting this as true of Him, not of any other than Him, so whenever your heart relies upon anything other than the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He), you are making your affirmation falsely, for the thing you have relied upon has become your god [*ilāh*], regardless of outer appearances. It is the heart that is the believer [*mu’min*], that is the monotheist [*muwahhid*], that is sincere [*mukhlis*], that is devout [*mutaqqī*], that is pious [*wari’*], that is abstinent [*ẓāhid*], that is convinced [*mūqin*], that is experienced [*‘arif*], that is effective [*‘amil*], that is the leader [*amīr*] while all the rest are its troops and its followers.

When you say: “There is no god but Allāh,” speak first with your heart and then with your tongue. Trust in Him and rely on Him, to the exclusion of any other than Him. Devote your outer [*ẓāhir*] to the law [*ḥukm*] and your inner [*bāṭin*] to the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted

is He). Leave good and evil to your outer, and concentrate on your inner together with the Creator of good and evil. When someone knows Him directly [*ʿarafahu*], he submits to Him. His tongue grows weary in His presence. He behaves humbly toward Him and toward His righteous servants. His cares, his grief and his weeping are multiplied. His fear and his dread increase, as well as his sense of shame and his remorse for previous shortcomings. He becomes intensely wary and afraid of losing the direct experience [*maʿrifā*], the knowledge [*ʿilm*] and the nearness he has attained, because the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He) is:

Doer of what He will, (11:107) and: He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

He fluctuates between two prospects. Looking back over his negligence, his impudence, his ignorance and his indulgence in pleasure, he melts with shame and fears chastisement. Then he looks toward the future, wondering whether he will be accepted or rejected, whether he will be stripped of all he has been given or allowed to keep it, and whether on the Day of Resurrection he will be in the company of the believers or that of the unbelievers. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

I am the one amongst you who knows Allāh best, and I am the one amongst you who fears Him most.

The most extraordinary and rare of all those who have real experience [*ʿarīfīn*] is one who receives safe conduct [*amn*]. What has been preordained for him is read out to him, so he knows his refuge and how he will come to arrive there. His innermost being [*sirr*] reads what is destined for him on the Preserved Tablet [*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*]. Then it informs his heart of this, telling it to keep it a secret and not to make it known to the lower self [*nafs*].

The first stage of this business is Islām, compliance with the commandments and avoidance of the prohibitions, and patient endurance of misfortunes. Its final stage is the renunciation [*zuhd*] of everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He), and an attitude of indifference toward gold and dirt, praise and blame, gifts and the withholding of gifts, Paradise and the Fire [of Hell], blessing and suffering, affluence and poverty, and the presence and absence of

creatures. When this has been fully accomplished, there is Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) beyond it all. Then comes the appointment by Him to leadership [*imāra*] and authority [*walāya*] over creatures. All who see one so appointed will derive great benefit from him, because of the awesome dignity [*haiba*] and radiance [*nūr*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with which he is invested.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Sixteenth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 11th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon him) said: "Treat this world with contempt, for, by Allāh, it acquires a pleasant odor only after it has been treated with contempt."

O young man! Putting the Qur'ān into practice will make you familiar with the One who sent it down, and practicing the Sunna will make you familiar with the Messenger, our Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace). He is always around the hearts of the [Lord's] people with his heart and his spiritual aspiration [*himma*]. It is he who makes their hearts fragrant with perfume and incense, who purifies and beautifies their innermost beings. It is he who opens up for them the door of nearness [to the Lord]. He is the maidservant who prepares their attire [*al-māshiṭa*]. He is the ambassador [*saḥr*] between their hearts and inner beings and their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whenever you take a step closer toward Him, his happiness increases.

Anyone who is blessed with this spiritual state [*ḥāl*] is under an obligation to give thanks and to become even more dutifully obedient. As for being happy with anything other than this, it is sheer delusion. The ignorant fool is happy in this world, whereas one who has knowledge is sorrowful in it. The ignorant person quarrels and disputes with destiny [*al-qadar*], whereas the one with knowledge conforms to it and accepts it gladly. O miserable wretch, do not quarrel and be at odds with destiny, lest you perish!

The crucial point is that you must readily accept the workings [*af'āl*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must detach your heart from creatures, and take it to meet the Lord of all creatures. You will

meet Him with your heart, your innermost being and your spiritual content [*ma' nā*], provided you always follow the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), His Messengers [*rusul*] and His righteous servants. If you are capable of serving the righteous [*aş-şāliḥūn*], then do so, because it will be good for you in this world and the hereafter. Even if you possessed the whole of this world, but your heart was not like their hearts, you would not really possess a single atom. If someone's heart is fit for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and is with Him in this world and the hereafter, he will arbitrate between people of all classes in accordance with the judgment [*ḥukm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Woe unto you! You must know your own worth. What are you in comparison with them? All you are interested in is food, drink, clothes, sexual intercourse, accumulating worldly goods and wanting more. You are active in worldly affairs, but lazy in affairs of the hereafter. You are stuffing your flesh and preparing it for the worms and insects of the earth. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has an angel who cries out every day, both morning and evening: "O sons of Adam, give birth [to offspring] for the sake of death, build for the sake of destruction, and accumulate [wealth] for the sake of your enemies!"

The believer has a correct intention in all his undertakings. He does not work in this world for this world's sake. He builds in this world for the sake of the hereafter. He constructs mosques [*masājīd*], bridges, schools and guesthouses, and mends the roads of the Muslims. If he builds anything else, it is for the benefit of those who cannot look after themselves, for widows and the poor, and to meet essential needs. He does this so that its equivalent will be built for him in the hereafter. He does not build to satisfy his natural impulse [*tab'*], his desires [*hawā*] and his lower self [*nafs*]. When a human being [*ibn Ādam*] is truly fit, he is with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in all his circumstances. He comes to be such that his absence [*faqd*] is because of Allāh and his presence [*wujūd*] is because of Allāh. His heart is linked to the Prophets [*an-nabiyyūn*] and the Messengers [*al-mursalūn*]. He accepts what they have brought by word and deed, with faith and

conviction. He is surely linked with them in this world and the hereafter.

He who remembers Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is always alive. He passes from life to life, experiencing death for an instant only. When remembrance [*dhikr*] has come to be established in the heart, the servant's remembrance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is constant, even if he does not remember Him with his tongue. As long as the servant is constant in his remembrance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), he is also constant in his compliance with His wishes and his ready acceptance of His workings. If we do not conform to the will of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) when summer comes around, the heat of summer will leave us exhausted, and unless we conform to His will when winter comes, the cold of winter will leave us chilled. By adjusting to them both, we avoid the discomforts caused by their extreme conditions. In similar fashion, by adjusting to trials and tribulations we dispel the anxiety, distress, anguish, worry and disturbance that comes with them.

How marvelous are the affairs of the people [of the Lord]! How excellent are their states of being [*ahwāl*]! Everything they receive from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a delight to them. He has let them drink the soporific drug [*banj*] of His intimate knowledge [*ma'rifa*], and their sleep is in the lap of His tender care. He has entertained them with His friendship, so of course it is delightful for them to stay with Him and away from everything apart from Him. They remain lifeless in His presence, for awe has possessed them. Then, when He so wishes, He resuscitates them, resurrects them, revives them and wakes them up. In His presence they are like the Companions of the Cave [*aṣḥāb al-kahf*] in their cave, concerning whom He said:

And we turned them over to the right, then over to the left. (18:18)

They are the most intelligent of people. They hope for forgiveness and salvation from their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances. This is their aspiration.

Woe unto you! You behave like people fit for the Fire [of Hell], yet you hope for Paradise, so your desire is misplaced. Do not be deluded into thinking that a temporary loan actually belongs to you, for it will

soon be taken from you. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has lent you life, so that you may use it to obey Him, but you have treated it as your own property, and have done with it whatever you wished. Good health is likewise on loan to you. Affluence is likewise on loan to you. Likewise security and social status [*jāh*] and all your blessings are on loan to you. Do not misuse these loans, because you will be required to repay them, and will be asked to account for them and for every detail of them. All the blessings at your disposal are from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so use them to help you to obey Him. To the [Lord's] people, all the things you like so much are mere distractions, since they wish for nothing but well-being [*salāma*] with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in this world and the hereafter.

A certain wise man is reported as having said: "Conform to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in respect of creatures, and do not conform to creatures [*al-khalq*] in respect of the Lord of Truth [*al-Ḥaqq*]. Those who are broken are broken, and those who are mended are mended. Learn conformity to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) from His righteous and conforming servants."

Seventeenth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 14th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

Do not be concerned about your sustenance [*rizq*], because its search for you is more intense than your search for it. When you have obtained today's sustenance, stop worrying about tomorrow's, as you have left yesterday behind. Yesterday is in the past, and as for tomorrow you do not know whether it will come to you or not, so concentrate on your today. If you really knew the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), you would be too preoccupied with Him to go looking for sustenance. His awe-inspiring majesty would prevent you from seeking anything from Him, because when someone really knows Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) his tongue ceases to function. The knower [*ʿārif*] remains dumb and speechless in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), until He sends him back to attend to the interests of His creatures. Then, when He restores him to them, He removes the paralysis from his tongue and the impediment from his speech. When Moses (peace be upon him) was shepherding the flocks and herds, his tongue was afflicted with stammering, gabbling, mispronunciation and stuttering, so when the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wished to send him back [to his people], He inspired him [*alhamahu*] to say:

Untie the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my words.
(20:27,28)

It was as if he were saying: "When I was out in the wilderness, shepherding the flocks and herds, I had no need of this, but now I have work to do among the people and I must be able to talk to them, so I need to be rid of the impediment to my speech." His Lord therefore removed

the knot from his tongue. He used a vocabulary of ninety clearly intelligible terms, a small number of words in proportion to those occurring in the speech of others. In his childhood, he had been eager to speak out of turn in the presence of Pharaoh and Āsiya, so Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) had made him swallow a live coal.

O young man! I see that you have little real knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger, little real knowledge of the saints [*awliyāʾ*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), of the deputies [*abdāl*] of His Prophets, and of His vicegerents [*khulafāʾ*] among His creatures. You are devoid of meaningful content. You are a cage without a bird, an empty ruin of a house, a tree whose leaves are all withered and scattered. The edifice of the servant's heart is constructed through Islām [surrender to the will of Allāh], then through the confirmation [*taḥqīq*] thereof in its reality [*ḥaqīqa*], which is submissive obedience [*istislām*]. Submit [*sallim*] the whole of yourself to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and He will make your own self and other people submit to you. You must detach your heart from you and from all creatures, and stand before Him naked of you and of them. Then, when the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) so wishes, He will clothe you and dress you and send you back to His creatures. You must therefore carry out His commandment requiring both you and them to win the good pleasure of the Messenger [*rasūl*] (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and Envoy [*mursal*], then stand and wait for His further orders, complying with everything He may impose upon you. Whenever someone strips himself bare of everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and stands before Him on the feet of his heart [*qalb*] and his innermost being [*sirr*], he is saying, in the language that needs no words [*lisān al-ḥāl*], what Moses (peace be upon him) expressed when he said:

I have hastened to You, my Lord, that You might be well pleased.
(20:84)

[Meaning:] "I have set aside my interest in this world, my interest in the hereafter, and the whole of creation. I have severed material ties [*al-asbāb*] and cast off influential connections [*al-arbāb*], and I have come to You in haste, that You might be well pleased with me, and forgive me for having been attached to them previously."

O ignorant one, where do you stand in all this? You are the slave of your own self [*nafs*], your worldly interests [*dunyā*] and your passions [*hawā*]. You are the slave of creatures, idolizing them [*mushrik bihim*] because you regard them as the source of harm and benefit. You are next to the Garden [of Paradise], hoping to enter it, and you are next to the Fire [of Hell], afraid of entering it.

Where are you, all of you, in relation to the Transformer of hearts and eyes [*Muqallib al-qulūb wa'l-abṣār*], the One who says to a thing "Be!" and it is [*kun fa-yakūn* (2:117)]?

O young man! Do not delude yourself about your obedient worship [*ṭāʿa*] and pride yourself on it. Beg the Lord of Truth (Glorified and Exalted is He) to accept it, and be wary and fearful lest He transfer you to some other condition. What guarantee do you have that your obedience will not be told to turn into disobedience, and your serenity to turn into confusion? When someone really knows Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), he does not get attached to anything and has no illusions about anything. He does not feel secure until he leaves this world with his religion intact and having preserved his relationship with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O my people! You must activate your hearts and dedicate them sincerely. Perfect sincerity [*ikhhlās*] is that which precludes everything apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and direct knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the basic principle [*aṣl*]. I see most of you as no more than liars in word and deed, in private and in public. You have no constancy. You have words without deeds, and deeds with neither sincerity nor affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*]. If you consult the touchstone [*miḥakk*] that is in my hands, and it is favorable to you, what good will this do you? You need to be accepted and approved by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Your chips must soon be exposed to smelting and the kindling of fire, and it will be said: "This is silver, this is ore, this is brass." Then the whole lot will be extracted, sorted in preparation for the Day of Judgment [*yawm al-qiyām*]. The same will be said of all your deeds in the performance of which you behaved hypocritically. Every deed done for the sake of any other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is null and void. Let your work, your love, your friendship and your quest be for the One who has told us:

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (42:11)

Deny and affirm. Deny the attribution to Him of anything that is unworthy of Him, and affirm as belonging to Him whatever is worthy of Him, namely what He is pleased to attribute to Himself, and what His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has been pleased to attribute to Him. If you do this, your hearts will be rid of [the heretical extremes of] anthropomorphism [*tashbīh*] and the negation of the divine attributes [*taʿṭīl*].

Befriend Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger, then the righteous [*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*] among His servants, with reverence, honor and respect. If you wish for salvation [*falāḥ*], let none of you attend my company without good manners; otherwise you should stay away. You are always going to excess, so curb your excesses during this hour while you are in my presence. Perhaps in the assembled company there is someone who deserves to be treated with respect and good manners beyond your minds and comprehension. The cook knows his dishes, the baker knows his bread, the craftsman knows his work, and one who issues an invitation knows those who are invited to attend.

Your interest in this world has made your hearts blind, so you cannot see anything with them. Beware of it, for it will make itself available to you time after time, until it gets you more and more involved, then it will finally make you its sacrificial victim. It will let you drink its wine and its drugs [*banj*], then it will cut off your hands and your feet, and gouge out your eyes. When the drug has worn off and consciousness returns, you will see what it has done to you. This is the consequence of loving this world, chasing after it, and being greedy for it and what it has to offer. This is what it does, so beware of it!

O young man! There is no salvation for you as long as you love this world. And as for you, who claim to love the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), there is no salvation or success for you, as long as you love the hereafter or anything whatsoever apart from Him. The lover who really knows [*al-ʿarīf al-muḥibb*] loves neither the one nor the other, nor anything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When his love is complete and fully realized, he will receive his allotted worldly shares to secure his well-being and satisfy his needs. The case will be similar when he arrives in the hereafter, for everything he left behind him he will now see at the gate of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). It will have gone ahead to wait

for him there, because he gave it up for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He gives His friends [*awliyā'*] their shares in things while they are keeping their distance from them. The comforts of the heart are internal [*bāṭina*], and the comforts of the self are external [*ẓāhira*]. The comforts of the heart come only after the self has been deprived of its comforts, so when the self is deprived, the gates of the heart's comforts are opened. Then, when the heart has received all the comforts it needs from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), mercy will come to the self. This servant will be told: "Do not kill your own self," for its share of comforts will then come to it, and it will receive them in a state of meekness [*wa-hiya muṭma'inna*].

Leave the company of those who excite your interest in this world, and seek the company of those who encourage you to turn away from it. Like inclines toward like, each revolving around the other. The lover gravitates toward lovers, until he finds his beloved among them. Those who are lovers of Allāh love one another for His sake. He surely loves them and supports them, and they give one another strength. They help one another to summon the people, inviting them to faith [*īmān*], affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] and sincerity [*ikhhlās*] in action. They take them by the hand and set them on the path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He who serves is served, he who acts well is treated well, and he who gives will receive. If you act to deserve the Fire, the Fire [of Hell] will be yours tomorrow.

As you pay allegiance, so shall you receive allegiance [*kamā tadīnu tudānu*]....

and:

According to how you are, so shall authority be conferred upon you.

Your deeds are your agents [*a'mālukum 'ummālukum*]. You act like people fit for the Fire, yet you hope for Paradise from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). How can you wish for Paradise without doing the work of those to whom Paradise belongs? The masters of the heart [*arbāb al-qulūb*] in this world are those who work with their hearts, not with their limbs and organs only. Work without the inner feeling [*muwāṭa'a*] of the heart, what does it accomplish? The showy pretender [*murā'i*] works with his physical organs, while the sincere person

[*mukhlis*] works with his heart as well as his physical organs; he works with his heart *before* his physical organs. The believer [*mu'min*] is alive, while the hypocrite [*munāfiq*] is dead. The believer works for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), while the hypocrite works for the sake of creatures, and looks to them for praise and reward for his work. The work of the believer is in both his outer and his inner, in both his private and his public life, in good times and in bad. The work of the hypocrite is in his public life only. His work is there when times are good, but when hardship comes along he does no work. He has no friendship for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He has no faith in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His Messengers or His Books. He does not remember the Gathering [*ḥashr*], the Resurrection [*nashr*] and the Reckoning [*ḥisāb*]. His Islām is to keep his head and his property safe [*li-yaslama*] in this world, not to keep him safe in the hereafter from the Fire that is the chastisement of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He keeps the fast [*yaṣūmu*], performs the prescribed prayers [*yuṣalli*], and studies religious knowledge in the presence of people, but when they are not around he reverts to his own business and his unbelief [*kufr*].

O Allāh, we take refuge with You from this condition. We beg You for sincerity in this world and sincerity tomorrow. Āmīn.

O young man! You must practice sincerity in your actions. Look beyond your work and the expectation of recompense for it from creatures [*al-khalq*] and Creator [*al-Khāliq*]. Work for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not for His blessings. Be one of those who long for His countenance. Seek His countenance until He grants your wish. Then, when He grants you this, you will obtain Paradise in this world and the hereafter: nearness to Him in this world, and in the hereafter the vision of Him. The fulfillment of His promise is a contract and guarantee [*bai' wa-ḍamān*].

O young man! Deliver your own self and your property into the hand of His destiny [*qadar*], His decree [*ḥukm*] and His judgment [*qaḍā'*]. Deliver the purchase [*al-mushtarā*] to the Purchaser [*al-mushtarī*] and tomorrow He will pay you the price.

Servants of Allāh! Deliver your own selves to Him, the price and the object of value. Say: "The self, property, Paradise and everything apart

from You, all are Yours. We wish for nothing apart from You.” The neighbor [*jār*] before the house [*dār*]. The companion [*rafiq*] before the road [*ṭariq*]. O you who desire the Garden [of Paradise], its purchase and cultivation must be today, not tomorrow. Increase its irrigation channels and let water flow in them today, not tomorrow.

O my people! On the Day of Resurrection, hearts and eyes will be turned inside out. On that day when feet will stumble, every one of the believers will stand upon the footing of his faith and his pious devotion [*taqwā*]. The steadiness of their feet will depend on the degree of their faith. On that day:

The wrongdoer will bite his own hands. (25:27)

[That is,] for having done wrong, and the pervert [*muḥsid*] will bite his own hands for having caused corruption and not having put it right, for having run away from his Master.

O young man! Do not overestimate the value of a deed, for deeds are valued according to their ultimate outcomes. You must beg the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) to make your outcome good, and to restrict you to those actions that He likes best. Beware, then again beware, when you repent, lest you undo your repentance and lapse back into sin. Do not lapse from your repentance because of something someone may say. Do not conform to your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*] and your natural impulses [*ṭabʿ*], while opposing your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). The sin is committed today, and tomorrow, since you have disobeyed the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will leave you in the lurch and will not help you.

O Allāh, help us to be obedient to You, and do not desert us because of disobedience toward You.

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Eighteenth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 16th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has informed you about two battles [*jihādān*]: the outer and the inner.

The inner one [*al-bāṭin*] is the battle with the self, the passions, natural impulses and Satan, as well as repentance from sins and mistakes, the maintaining of that repentance, and the renunciation of forbidden desires.

The outer one [*aḡ-ḡāhir*] is the battle with the unbelievers [*kuffār*] who stubbornly oppose Him and His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), involving exposure to their swords, their spears and their arrows, killing and being killed.

The inner battle is therefore more difficult than the outer battle, because it is something continuous and recurring. How could it not be harder than the outer battle, when it entails the separation and exile of the self from the forbidden things to which it is habitually accustomed, obedience to the commandments of the sacred law [*shar'*] and avoidance of what that law prohibits? If someone carries out the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in both kinds of *jihād*, he will receive his reward in this world and in the hereafter. Wounds inflicted on the body of the martyr [*shahīd*] are like an incision in a vein on the hand of one of you; he feels no pain from them. Death, in the case one who does battle with his own self [*mujāhid li-nafsihi*], and who repents his sins, is like a draught of cold water to a thirsty man.

O my people! We do not burden you with anything unless we give you something better than it. For one who is sought out [*murād*], at every instant there is a command and prohibition specially applicable

to him as far as his heart [*qalb*] is concerned, contrary to the rest of his fellow creatures, contrary to the hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*], the enemies of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger. Because of their ignorance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and their hostility toward Him, they shall enter the Fire [of Hell]. How should they not enter it, since in this world they have been opposing the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), conforming to their lower selves [*nufūs*], their passions [*ahwiya*], their natural impulses [*tibāʿ*], their habits [*ʿādāt*] and their devils [*shayāṭīn*], and preferring their worldly interests to their interest in the hereafter? How should they not enter the Fire, since they have heard this Qurʾān but have not believed in it, have not acted upon its commandments and have not avoided its prohibitions?

O my people! Believe in this Qurʾān, put it into practice, and be sincere in your actions. Do not pretend and do not be hypocritical in your conduct. Do not seek praise from people, or look to them to reward you for your deeds. Only a few individuals among the people believe in this Qurʾān and put it into practice for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is why the sincere are so few and the hypocrites are so many. How lazy you are in obeying Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and how energetic you are in obeying His enemy and your own enemy, Satan the accursed! The people [of the Lord] wish never to be free of obligations imposed by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), since they know that in patience with His obligations [*takālif*], His judgments [*aqdiyya*] and His decrees [*aqdār*] there lies much good for this world and the hereafter. They harmonize with Him in His operations [*taṣārīf*] and transformations [*taqālib*], sometimes in patience and sometimes in gratitude, sometimes in nearness and sometimes in remoteness, sometimes in weary labor and sometimes in repose, sometimes in affluence and sometimes in poverty, sometimes in health and sometimes in sickness. Their entire aspiration is to keep their hearts safe with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is the most important thing of all to them. They wish for their own salvation [*salāma*] and the salvation of all creatures [*al-khalq*] with the Creator [*al-Khāliq*] (Almighty and Glorious is He). They never cease begging the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) for the benefit of all creatures.

O young man! Be correct [*ṣaḥīḥ*], then you will be eloquent [*faṣīḥ*]. Be correct in law [*ḥukm*], then you will be eloquent in learning [*ʿilm*]. Be correct in secret, then you will be eloquent in public. The whole of well-being [*salāma*] lies in obedience to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), that is to say, in carrying out everything He has commanded, avoiding everything He has forbidden and bearing with patience everything He has decreed. When someone responds to the wishes of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will respond to that person's prayer, and when someone obeys Him, He will make all His creatures obedient to to that person.

O my people! Take instruction from me, for I am giving you sound advice. I am quite impartial toward myself and toward you. Whatever I have to deal with, my attitude is impartial. I am happy to observe the action [*fi'l*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in me and in you. Do not suspect my motives, because I wish for you what I wish for myself. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The believer does not perfect his faith until he wishes for his Muslim brother what he wishes for himself.

This is the saying of our commander [*amīr*], our director [*ra'īs*], our superior [*kabīr*], our leader [*qā'id*], our ambassador [*safīr*] and our intercessor [*shafī'*], the chief [*muqaddam*] of the Prophets [*nabiyyūn*], the Messengers [*mursalūn*] and the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*] from the time of Adam (peace be upon him) until the Day of Resurrection. He has denied perfection of faith [*kamāl al-īmān*] to anyone who does not want for his Muslim brother what he would like for himself. If what you want for yourself is the most delicious food, the finest clothing, the best accommodations, the most beautiful faces, and abundant financial resources, while what you want for your Muslim brother is the opposite of all this, then you are lying in your claim to perfection of faith.

O you who are so lacking in managerial skill [*tadbīr*!] You have a poor neighbor and you have poor relatives, yet you possess wealth that is subject to the alms-due [*ṣakāt*]. You turn a profit every day, profit on top of profit, and the amount you have at your disposal is more than enough to meet your needs, so your withholding what you could afford to give them must mean that you take pleasure in their condition of poverty. But of course, since you have your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*]

and your devils [*shayāṭīn*] at your back, it cannot be easy for you to do charitable work. You are accompanied by a greedy drive, many expectations and love of this world, but little pious devotion [*taqwā*] and faith [*īmān*]. You are an idolatrous worshipper [*mushrik*] of yourself, your property and other creatures, and there is nothing good about you. When a person is very fond of this world and his greed for it is intense, so that he forgets about death and meeting the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and fails to distinguish between what is lawful [*ḥalāl*] and what is unlawful [*ḥarām*], he comes to resemble the unbelievers [*kuffār*] who said:

There is nothing but our life in this world; we die, and we live, and nothing but Time can destroy us. (45:24)

You would seem to be one of them, but you have adorned yourself with Islām, you have spared your blood by declaring the twofold profession of faith [*ash-shahādātān*], and you have joined the Muslims in the prescribed prayer [*ṣalāt*] and fasting [*ṣawm*], though as a habit [*‘āda*], not as an act of worship [*‘ibāda*]. You give people the impression that you are devout [*taqī*], though your heart is wicked [*fājir*], and no benefit can come to you from this.

O my people! What benefit can you derive from going hungry and thirsty during the day, then breaking fast on forbidden food [*al-ḥarām*] at night? You are fasting [*taṣūmūna*] by day and sinning [*ta‘ṣūna*] by night. O consumers of forbidden food, you restrain yourselves from drinking water by day, then break your fast on the blood of the Muslims. There are some among you who fast during the day, and then behave immorally at night. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

My Community [*ummatī*] will not be left in the lurch, as long as they honor the month of Ramaḍān.

The way to honor it is to observe it with pious devotion [*taqwā*], and to keep its fast for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), while complying with all the rules [*ḥudūd*] of the sacred law [*ash-shar‘*].

O young man! Fast, and, when you break your fast, share part of your breakfast meal [*ifṭār*] with the poor. Do not eat alone, because when someone eats alone, and does not feed others, it is to be feared that he will have to experience poverty and beggary.

O my people! You eat your fill while your neighbors go hungry, yet you claim to be believers. Your faith is not genuine. One of you has plenty of food in front of him, more than enough for himself and his family, while the beggar is standing there at his door, only to be sent away disappointed. All too soon you shall see your report. All too soon you must become like him, and be rejected as you rejected him, although it was in your power to give him something.

Woe unto you! If only you would get up, take what you have in front of you and give him some of it! You would thereby combine the two virtues of humility in getting up from your place and of giving away part of your wealth. Our Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace) used to give to the beggar with his own hand, and feed his camel, and milk his sheep, and stitch his shirt. How can you claim to follow him, when you are opposing him in word and deed? You are making a sweeping claim with no evidence to back it up. It is said in the proverb: "Either you are a sincere Jew, or if not, do not show enthusiasm for the Torah." Thus I say to you, either you fulfill the prerequisites [*sharā'it*] of Islām, or do not say: "I am a Muslim." You must fulfill the prerequisites of Islām. You must practice the reality [*ḥaqīqa*] of Islām, which is obedient submission [*istislām*] before the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Comfort His creatures [*al-khalq*] today, so that the Lord of Truth [*al-Ḥaqq*] (Almighty and Glorious is He) may comfort you with His mercy tomorrow. Be merciful to those who are upon the earth, so that He who is in Heaven may be merciful to you.

After some discussion, the Shaikh] (may Allāh be well pleased with him) went on to say:

As long as you remain stuck with your own self, you will not attain to this station [*maqām*]. As long as you are supplying it with its luxury items, you are subject to its control. Provide it with its rightful due, but refuse to pamper it. Providing its rightful due will ensure its survival, while supplying it with luxuries will lead to its destruction. Its rightful due [*ḥaqq*] means what is indispensable to it in the way of food, clothing, drink, and a place in which to live. Its luxuries [*ḥazz*] are the delights and pleasures of the flesh. Take its rightful due from the hand of the sacred law [*ash-sharʿ*], and entrust its luxuries to destiny [*al-qadar*] and what is preordained [*as-sābiqa*] in the foreknowledge of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Give it permissible [*mubāḥ*], not forbidden [*ḥarām*]

food to eat. Sit at the gate of the sacred law, and bind it [the self] to the service thereof, then you will prosper. Have you not heard the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

So whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and from whatever he forbids you, abstain. (59:7)

Be satisfied with very little, and make your lower self [*nafs*] get accustomed to it, then if abundance comes to you from the hand of preordination and foreknowledge, you will be ready for it. Since you have been satisfied with very little, your lower self will not be destroyed, and what has been allotted to it will not pass it by.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) used to say: “Sufficient for the believer is what is sufficient for a young she-goat: A handful of poor-quality dates [*ḥashaf*] and a drink of water.” The believer eats to live [*yataqawwatu*], while the hypocrite lives to eat [*yatamattaʿu*]. The believer eats to live because he is on the road and has not yet reached the inn, where he knows he will find everything he needs. The hypocrite has no inn to look forward to, since he has no destination.

How wasteful you are of the days and the months! You spend your lives to no good purpose. I notice that you are not wasteful in your worldly affairs, but you do neglect your religious obligations. Turn this around and you will be on target! This world has never lasted for anyone, and neither will it last for you.

O my people! Do you hold a title deed [*tawqīʿ*] to life, signed by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? How lacking you are in good management! When someone cultivates the worldly interests of another, to the ruination of his life hereafter, he is accumulating worldly goods for another while scattering his own religion. He is driving a wedge between himself and the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and earning His displeasure for the sake of pleasing a creature like himself. If he realized and knew for certain that he must soon be dead, present before the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and that he will be called to account for all his dealings, he would surely refrain from many of his actions.

Luqmān the Wise (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said to his son: “O my dear son, just as you are sick without knowing how sick you are, so you shall die without knowing how you

die.” I am warning you and telling you what not to do, but you ignore my warning and do not desist. O you exiles from goodness, so preoccupied with this world, all too soon this world will rear up against you and strangle you. Far from deriving any benefit from what you have gathered from its hand and found so enjoyable, all this will prove to be a curse upon you.

O young man! You must be prepared to suffer and overcome evil. Words have sisters. Someone speaks a word to you, then you respond to it, so along come its sisters, and then there is evil present between you. Only a few individuals among the people are competent to invite their fellow creatures to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and they bear witness against them if they do not heed the call. They are a blessing [*ni‘ma*] for the believers and a disaster [*niqma*] for the hypocrites, the enemies of the religion of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O Allāh, make us fragrant with the affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*], and perfume us with the incense of extinction [*fanā’*] to creatures and everything whatsoever that is apart from You.

O monotheists [*yā muwahhīdīn*! O polytheists [*yā mushrikīn*! Nothing is in the power of any creature. They are all powerless, be they kings, mamelukes, sultans, rich or poor. They are all prisoners of the Power [*qadr/qadar*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Their hearts [*qulūb*] are in His hand, and He molds them [*yuqallibuhum*] as He will.

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (42:11)

Do not fatten your lower selves [*nufūs*], for they will devour you. Just as when someone takes a wild dog, looks after it and fattens it, the beast will surely devour him when he is with it alone. Do not give free rein to your lower selves, or sharpen their knives, because they will throw you into the ravines of perdition and betray you. Deprive them of the things they love, and do not give them scope for their desires.

O Allāh, help us against our own selves!

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Nineteenth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 18th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) would still be worthy of being feared and looked to in hope, even if He had created neither Garden [of Paradise] nor Fire [of Hell]. Obey Him in quest of His countenance, whatever gift or punishment of His may be in store for you. Obedience toward Him consists in carrying out His commandments, observing His prohibitions, and patient acceptance of His decrees. Repent to Him. Weep in His presence. Humble yourselves before Him with the tears of your eyes and of your hearts. Weeping is an act of worship [*ibāda*], and an extreme expression of humility. If you die in a state of repentance [*tawba*], good intention [*niyya ṣāliha*] and pure deeds [*a'māl zakīyya*], the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will make you benefit. He has undertaken to recompense the oppressed, because there is no one who shows His mercy and compassion to those who obey Him. You must love Him in this world and the hereafter. Let His love be more important to you than anything else. You cannot do without it, for it is what brings you benefit. Every creature wants you for his own sake, while the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wants you for your sake.

O my people! Your lower selves [*nufūs*] claim divinity [*ilāhiyya*], although you have no inkling of it, because they presume to be better than the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Their wishes are not His wishes. They love His enemy, Satan the accursed, and do not love Him. When His decisions [*aqdiya*] come, they neither comply nor accept with patience, but rather oppose and dispute. They have no inkling of obedient submission [*istislām*], since they are satisfied with nominal Islām, although this is useless to them and will bring them no benefit.

O young man! Maintain a state of fear and entertain no hopes, until you meet your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), have the feet of your heart and those of your physical body firmly planted before Him, and hold the document of safe conduct in your hands. At that point it will be appropriate for you to feel secure. When He has ensured your safety, you will experience much good in His presence. When He has ensured your safety it will be firmly established, because when He grants something He does not go back on it. When the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) selects a servant, He draws him near and brings him close, and whenever fear overtakes him, He lays upon him something to dispel that fear and to reassure his heart and his innermost being [*sirr*]. This is therefore between Him and him.

Woe unto you! O ignorant one, you turn away from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and leave Him behind the back of your heart, while you devote yourself to the service of creatures. The people [of the Lord] preoccupy themselves with the service of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so He draws their hearts close to Him. He makes Himself known [*ta'arrafa*] to their hearts, so they become familiar [*'arafat*] with Him. When one of you has become familiar with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), has finished his war with his lower self, his passions, his natural impulses and his devil, and has freed himself from them and from his worldly ties, and when the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has opened to him the door of His nearness, he will seek a task to perform. He will then be told: "Go back, work in the service of the people, and guide them toward Us. Serve the seekers and those who wish for Us."

You are unaware of what the people [of the Lord] are about. You labor day and night, exerting yourselves for those lower selves that are your own enemies, and you please your wives to the displeasure of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Many folk give the satisfaction of their wives and children priority over the good pleasure of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). As I observe your activities and recreations, I see that your only interests are your own self, your wife and your child, and that you have no inkling of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Woe unto you! You do not count as a man among men. The man [*rajul*] who is perfect [*kāmil*] in his manhood [*rujūliyya*] does not work for

anyone apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The eyes of your heart have gone blind, the serenity of your innermost being has become disturbed, and you are now screened off from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) without a clue [to your situation]. This is why some of the wise (may the peace of Allāh be upon them) have said: “Alas for those who are screened off without knowing that they are screened off [*mahjūbūn*]!”

Woe unto you! There is broken glass in your meal of crumbled bread, and you are eating it unawares, because of the force of your gluttony, the overwhelming urge of your appetite and desire, and the intensity of your greed. After a while your stomach will be cut and you will perish. Your misfortune is due entirely to your remoteness from your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He) and your preference for others. If you examined creatures [*khalq*] carefully, you would hate them and love their Creator [*Khāliq*]. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said: “Examine carefully, and you will loathe [*taqlu*] them,” meaning you will hate [*tubghidu*]. But you love and hate without searching examination. The intellect [*‘aql*] can probe, but you have no intellect. The heart [*qalb*] can probe, but you have no heart. The heart ponders, reflects and takes notice. As Allāh (Exalted is He) has said:

Surely in that there is a reminder for anyone who has a heart, or who gives ear with full attention. (50:37)

Let the mind [*‘aql*] be transformed into a heart [*qalb*]. Let the heart be transformed into an inmost core [*sirr*]. Let the inmost core be transformed into annihilation [*fanā’*], and let annihilation be transformed into being [*wujūd*].

Adam (peace be upon him) and the Prophets [*al-anbiyā’*] had desires and appetites, although they used to oppose their lower selves [*nufūs*] and would seek the good pleasure of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Adam (peace be upon him) felt one desire [*shahwa*] in Paradise. He made one mistake [*ḡalla*] while he was in Paradise. Then he repented, but there was no going back for him. Yet his desire was a praiseworthy one, because he wished that he might not have to leave the vicinity of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The Prophets (peace be upon them) never ceased to oppose their lower selves, their natural impulses [*ṭibā’*] and their desires [*shahawāt*], until

they became affiliated with the angels [*malā'ika*] from the perspective of reality [*ḥaqīqa*], because of the abundance of their struggles and strivings with their own selves [*anfus*]. The Prophets, the Messengers [*al-mursalūn*] and the saints [*al-awliyā'*] are patient, and you also must emulate them in patience [*ṣabr*].

O young man! Endure with patience the blows of your enemy, for you shall very soon strike him, kill him and seize his booty. Then you shall receive the robe of honor and the fief [*iqṭā'*] from the King.

O young man! Try hard not to injure anyone, and to have a good intention toward everybody, unless it be someone to whom the sacred law [*shar'*] commands you to cause injury, in which case your causing him injury is an act of worship [*'ibāda*].

As for the wise, the noble ones, the champions of truth, their Trumpet [*ṣūr*] has been sounded. They have roused the Resurrection [*al-qiyyāma*] for their own selves. They have turned away from this world through their aspirations. They have crossed over the Bridge [*aṣ-ṣirāt*] through their affirmation of the truth [*taṣḍīq*]. They have traveled with their hearts until they came to a halt at the gate of Paradise. They have stopped in their tracks and said: "We shall neither eat nor drink by ourselves, because the generous person [*al-karīm*] does not eat by himself alone." They have therefore beaten a retreat back to this world, that is to say, they have come to invite mankind to the obedient service of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and to inform them of what is over there, thus making matters easy for them.

When a person's faith [*īmān*] is strong, and he is firm in his conviction [*iqān*], he sees with his heart all the details of the Resurrection about which Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has informed him. He sees the Garden [of Paradise] and the Fire [of Hell] and what they contain. He sees the Trumpet and the angel in charge of it. He sees these things as he sees this world and its passing away, and the downfall of empires and their people. He sees creatures as if they were walking graves, and when he passes by the graves he can feel the blessing and torment within them. He sees the Resurrection and what it contains in the way of resistance and compliance. He sees the mercy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His chastisement. He sees the angels standing erect, and the Prophets [*al-anbiyā'*], the Messengers [*al-mursalūn*], the *Abdāl* and the Saints [*al-awliyā'*] in their ranks. He sees the people of

Paradise paying visits to one another, and the people of the Fire at war with one another in the Fire [of Hell].

When a person's vision is sound, he views creatures with the eye of his head, and with the eye of his heart he views the working of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) amongst them. He sees how He causes them to move and brings them to rest. Such is the noble vision of the saints [*awliyā'*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), of those who, when they look at a person, see his outer form [*ẓāhir*] with the eyes of their heads and his inner being [*bāṭin*] with the eyes of their hearts, and who see their Master (Almighty and Glorious is He) with the eyes of their inmost core [*sirr*].

He who serves, is served [*man khadama khudima*]. When destiny [*al-qadar*] comes to him, he goes along with it, letting it carry him toward land or sea, toward the shore or toward the mountain, as it feeds him sweet or bitter fare. He readily complies with it in honor and humiliation, in affluence and poverty, in health and sickness. He walks alongside destiny until, when destiny recognizes that he is quite exhausted, it alights and lets him ride in its place. It then becomes a vehicle for him, serves him and treats him with humility, because of his nearness to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His esteem for him. This is all due to his opposition to his lower self [*nafs*], his passions [*hawā*], his natural impulses [*ṭab'*], his habitual tendencies [*'ādāt*], his devils [*shayāṭīn*] and his evil companions [*aqrān as-sū'*].

O Allāh, grant us the blessing of compliance with Your destiny under all circumstances.

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Twentieth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 21st of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O people of this city, there is so much hypocrisy [*nifāq*] amongst you, and so little sincerity [*ikhlās*]! So many words without deeds! A word without a deed amounts to nothing; it is a mere pretext [*hujja*], not a process [*maḥajja*]. A word without a deed is like a house with no door and no utilities. It is a treasure from which nothing is ever spent. It is a naked claim without evidence, a form without spirit [*rūḥ*], an idol [*ṣanam*] with no hands, no feet and no power. The majority of your actions are like a body with no spirit. The spirit is sincerity, affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*], and firm adherence [*ṭhabāt*] to the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the exemplary practice [*sunna*] of His Messenger. Do not be so stupid! Face the other way and you will be on target! Carry out the commandments [of the sacred law], observe its prohibitions, and comply with the decree of destiny [*qadar*].

Out of all the people, only a few individuals have their hearts anesthetized with the drug [*banj*] of intimacy [*uns*], direct vision [*mushāhada*] and nearness [*qurb*], so that they do not feel the agonies and afflictions of destiny. The days of tribulation pass without their being aware of them, so they praise Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and give thanks to Him for the fact that, since they were not present, they could offer no resistance to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Misfortunes befall the people [of the Lord], as they befall you. There are those among them who endure with patience, and there are those who transcend both the misfortunes and the patient endurance thereof. The experience is painful when faith [*īmān*] is weak, when one is still a child. It is borne with patience when one is an adolescent youth, with

acquiescence when one is mature, and with cheerful acceptance when one is near and looking with his knowledge towards his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then come transcendence [*ghaiba*] and annihilation [*fanā'*], when the heart and the innermost being [*sirr*] are in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is the state of direct vision and conversation [*muḥādatha*]. One's inner being [*bāṭin*] is annihilated. One's existence [*wujūd*] is annihilated and obliterated in relation to creatures. It is brought into being in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), while on this side it is obliterated and vanishes away. Then, if the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) so wills, He resurrects the person. If He wishes to restore him, He restores him and reassembles his dissolved and disintegrated being, just as He will reconstitute the bodies of all creatures on the Day of Resurrection, after their dismemberment and fragmentation. In the case of creatures, He will reassemble their bones, their flesh and their hair, then He will order Isrāfīl to blow the spirits [*arwāh*] into them. As for these [special people we are discussing], He restores them without intermediary. With a glance He annihilates them, and with a glance He restores them.

The prerequisite of love [*maḥabba*] is that you should have no self-will [*irāda*] in the company of your Beloved [*maḥbūb*], and that you must not be distracted from Him by any interest in this world or the hereafter, nor by any creature. The love of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is not such a trivial thing that everybody can lay claim to it. Many a one lays claim to it though it is far removed from him, while many a one does not pretend to it although he actually possesses it.

Do not belittle anyone among the Muslims, because the mysteries [*asrār*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) are crystalized [*mubalwara*] within them. Be modest about yourselves, and do not behave arrogantly toward the servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Wake up from your heedlessness! The state you are in is nothing short of colossal folly. One might think you had passed the Reckoning, crossed over the Bridge [*aṣ-ṣirāt*], and seen your mansions in Paradise. What is this tremendous delusion? Every single one of you has committed many sins of disobedience against Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), without giving them a second thought, without

repenting them, and supposing that they have been forgotten. In fact, they are written in your records with their dates and times. Be they few or many, they must all be accounted for and punished. Come to your senses, O heedless ones! Wake up, O sleepy ones! Turn to the mercy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)! If someone is guilty of serious sins and errors, and if he persists in them and fails to repent and show remorse, he may be labeled with unbelief [*kufṛ*] unless he makes amends in time. O world with no hereafter! O creatures without a Creator! You fear nothing except poverty. You hope for nothing except affluence.

Woe unto you! Sustenance [*rizq*] is allotted by destiny [*maqsūm*]. It is never too much nor too little, never brought forward and never postponed. You are skeptical about the guarantee of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), greedily seeking what has not been assigned to your portion. Your greed has prevented you from attending meetings of the scholars and other beneficial occasions. You are afraid that your profits may be diminished, and that you may have too few customers!

Woe unto you! Who fed you when you were a baby in your mother's womb? You are reliant on yourself, on creatures, on your dollars and cents, on your buying and selling, and on the ruler [*sultān*] of your country. Anyone you rely upon is your god [*ilāh*]. Anyone whom you fear, and on whom you pin your hopes, is your god. If you regard anyone as the source of injury and benefit, without recognizing that it is the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) who actually empowers him, then he is your god. In a little while you shall see your report. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will deprive you of your hearing and your sight, of your vigor and your property and everything you have relied on instead of Him. He will sever your relations with people, harden their hearts against you, and snatch their helping hands away from you. He will dismiss you from your occupation and close all doors in your face. He will send you away from door to door, and will give you neither morsel nor crumb. If you pray to Him, He will not answer you.

All this will be due to your associating partners [*shirk*] with Him, your reliance on others instead of Him, your seeking His blessings from others instead of Him, and your availing yourself of those blessings to

sin against Him. You must have seen this happen to many people of this type, since it is the usual outcome for sinners. There are some, however, who make amends. When someone does so, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) accepts his repentance, looks upon him with mercy, and treats him with generosity and kindness.

O creatures of Allāh, repent! O scholars [*‘ulamā’*], O jurists [*fuqahā’*], O ascetics [*zuhhād*], O servants [*‘ibād*], there is not one among you who is not in need of repentance! I have your reports concerning your life and your death. While the beginnings of your affairs may be obscure to me, their later stages to the time of your death have been disclosed to me. If the origin of your wealth is hidden from me, I wait to see what comes of it. If what is forthcoming is expenditure on children and family, on the paupers [*fuqarā’*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and on the welfare of His creatures, I know that it originates from something legitimate [*ḥalāl*]. If it is used for the benefit of the champions of truth [*aṣ-ṣiddiqūn*], who are the special favorites [*khawāṣṣ*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), I know that its origin and the way it was obtained can be ascribed to total trust [*tawakkul*] in the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and that it must be absolutely lawful [*ḥalāl ṭīlq*]. I am not there with you in your markets, yet the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) describes your merchandise to me by this and other methods.

O young man! Beware in case the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) should see any other than Himself within your heart. Beware in case He should see in your heart the fear of any other, or hope pinned on any other, or love of any other than Him. Purify your hearts of all apart from Him. Regard none but Him as the source of injury and benefit. You are in His house and enjoying His hospitality.

O young man! You see and fall in love with all those pretty faces, but this is a defective love, for which you will be punished. Genuine love [*al-ḥubb aṣ-ṣahīḥ*], the one that never changes, is the love of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is the One you behold with the eyes of your heart, and this is the love of the spiritual champions of truth [*aṣ-ṣiddiqūn ar-rūḥāniyyūn*]. You must love not just with faith [*īmān*], but with conviction [*iqān*] and direct perception [*al-‘ain*]. The veils have been removed from the eyes of your hearts, so they have seen what is in

the invisible realm [*al-ghaib*]; they have seen what they cannot possibly explain.

O Allāh, grant us the blessing of Your love [*maḥabba*], as well as pardon [*ʿafw*] and well-being [*ʿāfiya*].

Your allotted shares [*aqṣām*] are placed on deposit with this world until times already known to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). No one can prevent them from being delivered to you at the moment when permission arrives from the One who assigns their ownership. They laugh at people, devastate their minds, and treat them with derision. They make fun of anyone who tries to get any part of them that has not been allotted to him, and of anyone who tries to get his own portion without permission from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O my people! If you turn away from their door and approach the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), they [your allotted shares] will come out and follow you. Apply to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for intelligence [*ʿaql*]. When this world approaches the saints [*awliyāʾ*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), they say to it: “Go off and try your deception on others. We know you very well, for we have seen through you. Do not put us to the test, for we know all about you. Do not offer us your fake attractions, for your ‘gold’ coin is merely gilded. Your glamor is the superficial coating of a hollow wooden idol, with no spirit [*rūḥ*] inside it. You are an exterior [*ẓāhir*] with no significant content [*maʿnā*], a spectacle with no meaningful message. It is the hereafter that has the real spectacle and meaningful message to offer.”

When the faults [*ʿuyūb*] of this world become apparent to the people [of the Lord], they flee from it. When the faults of creatures become apparent to them, they stay away from them, flee from them and avoid their company. They frequent the deserts and wastes, ruins and caves, and the jinn and angels that roam the earth. The jinn and angels come to them in various forms of disguise. They appear to them at certain times in the guise of bearded ascetics [*ṣuḥḥād*] and monks [*ruḥbān*], and sometimes in the shape of wild animals. They appear in any form they wish. The disguises used by the angels and jinn are just like the clothes anyone of you may have hanging in his wardrobe at home, to be worn as he may see fit.

At the outset of his quest for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), the genuine seeker [*murīd*] cannot bear the sight of creatures or the sound of their voices. He cannot bear the sight of the tiniest fragment of this world, and cannot bring himself to look at any created entity. His heart becomes distracted, his mind absent and his eyes glazed. He remains like this until the Hand of Mercy [*raḥma*] alights on the head of his heart, bringing him tranquillity. He remains inebriated [*sakrān*] until he inhales the perfume of nearness to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), whereupon he recovers consciousness. When he is firmly established in his affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*], his sincerity [*ikhlās*], his direct experience [*maʿrifa*] of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and his knowledge [*ʿilm*] and love [*maḥabba*] of Him, he acquires stamina and a broad tolerance of creatures. Strength comes to him from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he carries their burdens without strain. He approaches them and seeks them out. While his work is wholly devoted to their welfare, he is not distracted from his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) for the twinkling of an eye.

The apprentice ascetic [*mutaṣaḥḥid*], who is a novice in his ascetic practice [*al-mubtadiʿ fī zuḥdihi*], will run away from creatures. As for the ascetic who has completed his training [*az-ẓāhid al-kāmil fī zuḥdihi*], far from worrying about them and running away from them, he will actually go looking for them, because he has become a real knower [*ʿārif*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and one who really knows [*ʿarafa*] Allāh neither flees from nor fears anything apart from Him. The novice [*mubtadiʿ*] flees from offenders and sinners, while the accomplished master [*muntahī*] seeks them out. How could he not go looking for them, when he is in possession of all their remedies? This is why a certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) has said: “No one may laugh in the face of the sinful offender [*fāsiq*], except the ʿārif [one who really knows Allāh].”

When a person's direct knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is complete, he becomes a guide toward Him. He becomes a net with which He fishes creatures from the ocean of this world. He is given the strength to put Iblīs and his armies to flight. He takes people by the hand.

O you who have withdrawn into asceticism in ignorance of Him, come forth and hear what I have to say! O ascetics of the earth, come

forth, demolish your monastic cells and draw near to me! You have been sitting in your places of retreat for no real reason. You have gained nothing. Come forth and gather the fruits of wisdom. May Allāh have mercy on you! It is not for my sake that I want you to come, but rather for your own sakes.

O young man! You need to labor until you have learned the craft. You must build up and pull down a thousand times, until you can build something so well that it will not collapse. When you cease to exist [*fanaita*] in the construction and demolition, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will build you a structure that cannot fall down.

O my people! When will you understand? When will you grasp what I am pointing out? Go around looking for the seekers of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), then, when you meet up with them, serve them with your goods and your persons. Genuine seekers have their own peculiar fragrances. They have shining signs apparent in their faces. But there is a blight on you, on your perceptive faculties and on your diseased intellects. You cannot distinguish between the champion of truth [*ṣiddīq*] and the heretic [*ẓindīq*], between the lawful [*ḥalāl*] and the unlawful [*ḥarām*], between the toxic [*masmūm*] and the nontoxic, between the polytheist [*mushrik*] and the monotheist [*muwahḥid*], between the sincere [*mukhlis*] and the hypocrite [*munāfiq*], between the disobedient [*ʿāṣī*] and the obedient [*tāʿi*], between the seeker of the Lord of Truth [*al-Ḥaqq*] (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the seeker of creatures [*al-khalq*].

Serve the Shaikhs [*shuyūkh*] who put their knowledge into practice, so that they may acquaint you with things as they really are. Strive for real knowledge [*maʿrifat*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), because when you really know Him [*ʿaraftumūhu*], you will really know what is apart from Him. Get to know Him, then love Him. If you do not see Him with the eyes in your heads, behold Him with the eyes of your hearts. If you recognize Him as the source of blessings, you must love Him of necessity. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Love Allāh for providing you with His blessings, and love me because of the love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has for me.

O my people! He provided you with His blessings while you were still in your mothers' wombs and after your emergence therefrom. Then He

gave you vital energies and strengths and vigor. He blessed you with obedience to Him, and made you Muslims, followers of His Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), gratitude and love for whom are like gratitude and love for Him. When you recognize Him as the source of blessings, the love of creatures will vanish from your hearts.

The real knower [‘*ārif*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), who loves Him and beholds Him with the eyes of his heart, is he who recognizes Him as the source of all benefit and harm. He no longer pays any attention to creatures who treat him well or badly. If beneficial action [*ihsān*] is seen to emanate from one of them, he ascribes it to the power of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) to exact forced labor [*taskhīr*], and if harmful action is seen to emanate from one of them, he ascribes it to His power to inflict painful experiences [*taslīt*]. Thus his focus is shifted from creatures to the Creator. At the same time, he must give the sacred law [*shar‘*] its due, and not annul its binding force [*hukm*].

The heart of the knower [‘*ārif*] moves from state to state [*hāla*], so that he is fortified in his abstinence from creatures and his abandonment and renunciation of them, so that he prefers the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and his absolute trust [*tawakkul*] in Him grows stronger. He loses the sense of getting things from creatures, and is left with the awareness of receiving them from creatures with the helping hand of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The understanding [‘*aql*] he has in common with fellow creatures is consolidated and confirmed, and he is equipped with another understanding, namely the understanding that comes from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O poor dependant of creatures! O idolizer [*mushrik*] of them! Beware in case death should come upon you while you are in your present condition! Allāh will not open His door to your spirit [*rūḥ*]. He will not view it with favor, because He is angry with everyone who associates partners with Him and relies on any but Him. You must go into isolation from the self [*nafs*], then into isolation from creatures, then into isolation from this world, then into isolation from the hereafter, then into isolation from everything apart from the Master [*al-Mawlā*]. If you wish to be secluded together with the Master, you must become

isolated from your existence [*wujūd*], your planning [*tadbīr*] and your crazy nonsense [*hadhayān*].

Woe unto you! You sit there in your monastic cell [*ṣawmaʿa*], while your heart is in people's houses, awaiting their arrival and their gifts. Your time has been wasted, and you have imagined the form with no meaningful content. You cannot make yourself fit for something for which Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has not made you fit. Unless the aptitude comes from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), neither you nor other creatures are capable of it. If He wants you for some purpose, He will prepare you for it. Unless you have a sound inner [*bāṭin ṣaḥīḥ*] and a heart devoid of everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), mere solitude will do you no good.

O Allāh, may I benefit from what I have to say, and let them benefit from what I am saying and they are hearing!

Twenty-first Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 25th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

This world is a veil over the hereafter, and the hereafter is a veil over the Lord of both this world and the hereafter. Every created thing [*makhlūq*] is a veil over the Creator [*Khāliq*] (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whatever you have become attached to represents a veil for you. Pay no attention to creatures, to this world, or to anything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), until you come to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) on the feet of your innermost being [*sirr*] and the genuineness of your abstinence [*zuhd*] from all that is apart from Him, completely naked, bewildered about Him, seeking His aid and His help, observing His preordination [*sābiqa*] and His foreknowledge [*ilm*]. When your heart and your innermost being have truly arrived and have entered His presence, when He has drawn you near, brought you close and revived you, when He has given you authority over hearts [*qulūb*], put you in command of them and made you a physician for them, only then must you pay attention to creatures and to this world. Your attention to them will now be a blessing where they are concerned. Your receiving this world from their hands, giving it back to the poor among them, and accepting your own allotted share [*qism*] in full, will be an act of worship [*ibāda*], obedience [*ṭāʿa*] and salvation [*salāma*]. When someone can accept the world in this manner, far from being damaged by it, he is saved from it and his allotted shares are purified from the stench of its filth.

Saintship [*wilāya*] has its mark [*ʿalāma*] in the faces of the saints [*awliyaʾ*], where it is recognized by people of intuitive discernment [*firāsa*]. Signs [*ishārāt*] speak of saintship, not the tongue.

Anyone seeking true success [*falāh*] should humbly submit his own self and his property to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and extract his heart from creatures and this world, as a hair is extracted from dough or yogurt. Likewise from the hereafter, and likewise from everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then you will give everything that has a rightful claim its due in His presence. You will consume your own allotted portions of this world and the hereafter while you are at His door, and the two of them [this world and the hereafter] are standing by as servants. Do not consume your share of this world while it is seated and you are standing. You must consume it at the King's door, while you are seated and the world is standing, with the tray on its head, serving anyone who is stationed at the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and humiliating anyone who is stationed at its own door. Consume it as a tribute to the boundless wealth and glory of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The people [of the Lord] are happy to accept bankruptcy in this world for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and to be drawn close to Him is more pleasing to them than the [rewards of] the hereafter. They seek nothing from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) apart from Allāh. They know that [the things of] this world have been allotted, so they have abandoned the quest for them. They also know that the degrees of the hereafter and the bliss of Paradise have been allotted, so they have given up seeking for this and working to earn it. They wish for nothing apart from the countenance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When they enter Paradise they will not open their eyes until they see the light of the face of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

You must love detachment [*tajrīd*] and solitude [*tafrīd*]. If a person's heart is not detached [*mujarrad*] from creatures and material concerns [*asbāb*], he cannot travel the highroad of the Prophets [*nabiyyūn*], the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], until he is satisfied with a tiny fraction of this world and surrenders the greater part to the hand of destiny. Do not get involved in the quest for much, because you will perish. If much does come to you from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), not of your own volition, you will be entitled to it.

It is reported of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) that he used to say: “Preach to the people with your knowledge as well as your speech.” O preacher [*wāʿiẓ*], admonish the people with the purity of your innermost being [*sirr*] and the devotion [*taqwā*] of your heart; do not address them with a refined façade over an ugly conscience [*sarīra*].

The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) inscribed faith [*īmān*] in the hearts of the believers [*al-muʾminūn*] before He created them. This is preordainment [*sābiqa*], and it is not permissible to stick with preordainment or to depend upon it. One must strive, take risks and make efforts. One must strive to gain faith and conviction [*īqān*]. One must expose oneself to the fragrant breezes [*naḥāḥāt*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and be constantly in attendance at His door. Our hearts must strive to acquire faith, then perhaps the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will give it to us without exertion or toil.

Have you no sense of shame? The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) qualifies Himself with attributes [*ṣifāt*] which He finds pleasing to Himself. Would you interpret them away and refuse to apply them to him? Is what was good enough for your predecessors, the Companions [*ṣaḥāba*] and the Successors [*tābiʿūn*], not good enough for you? Our Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is upon the Throne [*al-ʿarsh*], as He has said, with no question of anthropomorphism [*tashbih*], divesting of attributes [*taʿṭīl*], or materialization [*tajsim*].

O Allāh, sustain us, help us to succeed, keep us away from heretical innovation [*ibtidāʿ*], and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Twenty-second Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of the last day of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion, when someone asked: "How can I evict the love of this world from my heart?":

Notice the world's fickle treatment of its lords [*arbāb*] and its sons, how it tricks them, plays games with them, and pushes them behind it, then promotes them step by step, in order to raise them above the people and put them in control of them, and in order to display its treasures and its wonders. But while they are enjoying their lofty status, their dominance, their pleasant lifestyle and having the world at their service, this is when it seizes them, binds them, cheats them and throws them headlong down from that elevated position, so that they are dismembered, disintegrated and destroyed, while the world stands there laughing at them with Iblīs by its side, laughing along with it. This is what it has done and will do with many of the emperors, kings and rich men, from the time of Adam (peace be upon him) till the Day of Resurrection. It exalts then abases, promotes then sets back, enriches then impoverishes, nurtures then sacrifices. Rare indeed are the few individuals who remain unharmed by it, who master it instead of being dominated by it, who receive help against it and escape its greedy clutches. There is no escape from its greedy clutches unless one knows it really well, and is intensely wary of it and of its cunning tricks.

O questioner, if you observe its faults with the eyes of your heart, you will be able to evict it from your heart. But if you look at it with the eyes in your head, you will be distracted by its charm instead of noticing its faults. You will be unable to evict it from your heart and to abstain from it, and it will kill you as it has killed others. Struggle with your own self [*nafs*] until it becomes tame. Once it has become tame, it will recognize the faults of this world and abstain from it. Its tameness [*tuma'nīna*]

consists in its taking instruction from the heart, complying with the wishes of the innermost being [*sirr*], obeying both of these in all they may command or forbid, and being satisfied when they give and patient when they withhold. Once it has become tame, it will become attached to the heart and will rely upon it. You will see the crown of pious devotion [*taqwā*] on its head, and the robes of nearness clothing it.

You must develop faith [*īmān*] and belief [*taṣḍīq*], and give up disbelieving the people [of the Lord] and quarreling with them. Do not dispute with them, for they are kings in this world and the hereafter. They possess the nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so they possess everything that is apart from Him. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has enriched their hearts. He has filled them with His nearness [*qurb*] and intimate friendship [*uns*] with Him, and with His radiant lights [*anwār*] and His gracious favor [*karāma*]. They are not impressed by the power of those who belong to this world and of those who exploit it. They do not pay attention to its beginning, but concentrate on its final outcome [‘*āqiba*] and its passing away [*fanā*’]. They focus the eyes of their innermost beings [*asrār*] on the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They worship neither from fear of destruction [*hulk*] nor in hope of dominion [*mulk*]. He has created them for His own sake and to perpetuate His friendly company [*ṣuḥba*], and “He creates that which you do not know” (16:8), for He is “Doer of what He will” (85:16).

“When the hypocrite talks, he lies. When he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he is trusted he betrays.” If a person is innocent of these vices mentioned by the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), he is innocent of hypocrisy [*nifāq*]. These characteristics are the touchstone and the distinction between the believer [*mu’min*] and the hypocrite [*munāfiq*]. Take this touchstone and this mirror, and use it to examine the face of your heart. Look to see whether you are a believer or a hypocrite, a monotheist [*muwahḥid*] or a polytheist [*mushrik*].

Everything in this world is a temptation [*fitna*] and a distraction, except what is taken with a worthy intention [*niyya ṣaliḥa*] for the sake of the hereafter. If one’s intention is worthy in dealing with this world, it becomes otherworldly. Any blessing [*ni‘ma*] that is received without gratitude to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a curse

[*niqma*]. Secure the blessings of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) by giving thanks to Him. Two things constitute thankfulness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He): The first is taking advantage of blessings in order to perform acts of obedience [*tā'āt*] and to provide comfort to the poor. The second is acknowledging the Benefactor [*al-Mun'im*] who supplies them, and giving thanks to the One who bestows them, namely the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: "Everything that distracts you from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is unlucky [*mash'ūm*] for you." If remembrance [*dhikr*] of Him distracts you from Him, it is unlucky for you. Prayer [*ṣalāt*], fasting [*sawm*], pilgrimage [*hajj*] and all acts of charity—all of this is unlucky for you. If His blessings distract you from Him, then they are unlucky for you. You have repaid His blessings with sins against Him and resorting in important matters to others instead of Him. Falsehood and hypocrisy have gained control of you in action and at rest, of your outer form [*ṣūra*] and your inner content [*ma'nā*], by night and by day. Satan has cunningly deceived you and has made lying and wicked deeds appear attractive to you. You are lying even in your ritual prayer [*ṣalāt*], because you say: "*Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is Supremely Great]!" But you are lying, because in your heart you have a god [*ilāh*] other than Him. Whatever you rely on is your god. Everything you fear, or look to in hope, is your god. Your heart is not in harmony with your tongue. Your deeds do not match your words. Say "*Allāhu Akbar*" a thousand times with your heart and once with your tongue. Do you not feel ashamed of saying: "*Lā ilāha illa'llāh* [There is no god but Allāh]," when you have a thousand objects of worship [*ma'būd*] besides Him? Repent to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for everything you are involved in.

O you who impart knowledge, though you are satisfied with it in name alone, without the practical application, what good can it do you to say, "I am a scholar," since you are telling a lie? How can you feel at ease with yourself, when you are instructing others to do what you yourself do not practice? As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Why do you say what you do not do? (61:2)

Woe unto you! You tell people to be honest, while you are false. You tell them to affirm the divine Unity [*tawḥīd*], while you are a polytheist [*mushrik*]. You tell them to be sincere, while you are a hypocrite. You tell them to give up sins, while you are committing them. The sense of shame [*ḥayāʾ*] has departed from your sight. If you had any faith, you would feel ashamed. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The sense of shame is part of faith [*al-ḥayāʾu min al-īmān*].

You have no faith [*īmān*], no conviction [*iqān*] and no loyalty [*imāna*]. You have betrayed knowledge [*ilm*], so your loyalty has vanished and you been recorded with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) as a traitor. I know of no remedy for you except repentance and persistence therein. When a person has genuine faith in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His decree, he surrenders all his affairs to Him, and makes no one a partner [*sharīk*] to Him where they are concerned. Do not associate creatures or material means [*asbāb*] with Him, and do not be obliged to them instead of to Him! Once the person has really achieved this, He delivers him from misfortunes in all his spiritual states [*aḥwāl*], and he now progresses from faith [*īmān*] to conviction [*iqān*]. Then saintship [*wilāya*] will come to him, [then] *Badaliyya*, and then *Ghawthiyya*. Perhaps *Qutbiyya* will come in the last of his spiritual states. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will glory in him [*yubāḥī bihi*] in the presence of all His creatures, be they jinn, human beings, angels or spirits [*arwāḥ*]. He will promote him and draw him near. He will give him authority over His creatures. He will grant him sovereignty and power. He will love him and cause His creatures to love him.

The basis and starting point of all this is faith and belief [*taṣḍīq*] in Him and His Messengers. The foundation of this business is Islām, then faith, then putting into practice the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the law [*sharīʿa*] of His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), then sincerity [*ikhhlās*] in action, together with the heart's affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*]. With the perfection of faith, the believer becomes extinct [*yafnā*] to himself, to his work, and to everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He),

so that he performs his deeds while he is in a state of detachment [*maʿzīl*] from them. He continues to struggle with his own self [*nafs*] and all creatures, on the side of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), until He guides him to His path. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

As for those who strive in Our cause, We surely guide them in Our ways. (29:69)

You must be abstemious in all things, since you are now ready to accept His management [*tadbīr*]. He turns them [His creatures] over and over with the hand of His destiny [*qadar*], then if they conform to it He transfers them to His power [*qudra*]. What bliss [*yā tūbā*] for those who comply with destiny, who wait for the action [*fiʿl*] of the Preordainer [*al-Muqaddir*], who act in accordance with destiny, who travel along with destiny, and who are not ungrateful for the blessing of destiny's decrees [*aqdār*]. The token [*āya*] of the blessing of the Preordainer is His mercy [*rahma*], nearness [*qurb*] to Him, and satisfaction with Him to the exclusion of all His creatures. When the servant's heart attains to the contact with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), He makes him so satisfied with Himself that he has no need of creatures. He draws him near, grants him power and sovereignty, and says to him:

You are today in our presence established and worthy of trust. (12:54)

He makes him vicegerent in His kingdom, as the Pharaoh of Egypt made Joseph (peace be upon him) his vicegerent, delegating to him the power to rule his kingdom and its subjects and to administer his dominion and its resources, and appointing him custodian of his treasures. The experience of the heart is similar. Once it is truly sound, and its nobility and its purity from everything apart from its Master (Almighty and Glorious is He) are clearly apparent, He puts it in charge of His servants and His kingdom, in both worldly and otherworldly spheres, so that it comes to be like the Kaʿba of those who seek and aspire to follow the path to this knowledge [*ʿilm*] and practice [*ʿamal*] through outer knowledge [*al-ʿilm aẓ-ẓāhir*].

Do not make a habit of idleness and laziness in obeying the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), because He will inflict chastisement upon you. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

When the servant is lax in performance, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) afflicts him with anxiety.

He afflicts him with anxiety over things that have not been allotted to him, with the worry of dependents, family problems, lack of profit in his livelihood, rebelliousness on the part of his children, and a discordant relationship with his wife. All this will affect him, whichever way he may turn, as a punishment for his laxity in obeying his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and for letting himself be distracted from Him by this world and creatures. As Allāh (Exalted is He) has said:

What concern has Allāh for your punishment if you are thankful and believe? (4:147)

Nor is it permissible for anyone to argue against Him on the grounds that his conduct and the verdict thereon were subject to His predetermination [*qadā'*] and His predestination [*qadar*].

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

Woe unto you! How long will you go on being preoccupied with yourself and your family, to the neglect of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: "When your son has learned to gather date-stones, leave him alone and concentrate on your own self together with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)." What he meant by this was that, once the boy has learned that date-stones are useful for some purpose, and that they are worth a price, he has already learned enough to fend for himself, so you should not waste your time and energy on him, since he can manage very well without you.

Teach your children practical skills, and leave yourself free to serve Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), because your wife and children can in no way enable you to dispense with Allāh. Accustom yourself, your wife and your children to being satisfied with bare necessities, while you and they devote yourselves to your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). If an abundance of fortune [*rizq*] awaits you in the invisible realm [*al-ghaib*], it will come to you at the time appointed for it in the presence of Allāh. You must recognize it as from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and steer clear of idolatrous association [*shirk*] with creatures. If destiny does not hold such abun-

dance in store for you, however, you can do without things through your abstemiousness [*zuhd*] and frugality [*qanāʿa*].

When a frugal believer has some worldly need, he enters the presence of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) with the feet of his begging, his entreaty, his humble submission and his repentance. Then, if He gives him what he wishes, he thanks Him for His gift, and if He does not grant his request, he concurs with the refusal and patiently accepts His will, with neither protest nor argument. He does not seek enrichment through his religion [*dīn*], his pretense [*riyāʿ*], his hypocrisy [*nifāq*] and his underhand dealings [*tanammus*], as you do, O hypocrite [*munāfiq*]! Pretense, hypocrisy and sins are the cause of poverty, humiliation and dismissal from the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The hypocritical pretender gets the things of this world through his religion, and by assuming the guise of the righteous [*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*] without being worthy of it. He adopts their way of speaking and their style of dress, but he does not behave as they behave. He claims to be related to them, though he is no kin of theirs. Your saying: “There is no god but Allāh [*lā ilāha illaʿllāh*]” is a mere claim [*daʿwā*]. The hard evidence [*bayyina*] is your total trust [*tawakkul*] in Him, your confidence [*thiqā*] in Him, and your heart’s rejection of any other than Him.

O liars, tell the truth! O fugitives from your Master, return! Direct your hearts toward the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), become reconciled with Him and apologize to Him. In the state of faith [*īmān*], you take from this world by permission of the sacred law [*sharʿ*]. In the state of saintship [*wilāya*] you receive by virtue of the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), with both of them bearing witness to it, meaning with the testimony [*shahāda*] of both the Book and the Sunna. In the state of *Badaliyya* and *Qutbiyya*, you receive through the action [*fiʿl*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), as you leave things up to Him.

O young man! Have you no sense of shame? Weep for yourself, because you have been deprived of right direction [*ṣawāb*] and the help you need to succeed [*tawfiq*]. Are you not ashamed? One day you are obedient, then disobedient the next. One day you are sincere [*mukhlis*], but the next you are a polytheist [*mushrik*]. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

If both days are the same for a person, he is defrauded [*maghbūn*], and if someone’s yesterday was better than his today, he is deprived [*mahrūm*].

O young man! You cannot make something happen, but you must play your part. Exert yourself and help will come from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Get moving in this ocean in which you are immersed, then the waves will lift you up and roll you toward the shore. The prayer [*du‘ā*’] is from you, and the response is from Him. The effort [*ijtihād*] is from you, and the aid to success [*tawfiq*] is from Him. The renunciation [*tark*] is from you, and the protective zeal [*ḥamiyya*] is from Him. Be sincere in your quest and He will show you the entrance to His nearness. You will see the hand of His mercy reaching out toward you, and His kindness [*luṭf*], His generosity [*karam*] and His love [*maḥabba*] all yearning for you. This is the goal of the quest of the [Lord’s] people.

What am I to do with you, O slaves of the lower selves [*nufūs*], the natural impulses [*tibā‘*], the passions [*ahwiya*] and the devils [*shayāṭīn*]? I have nothing at my disposal except a truth within a truth [*ḥaqq fī ḥaqq*], an understanding within an understanding [*lubb fī lubb*], a purity within a purity [*ṣafā’ fī ṣafā’*], a separation [*qaṭ‘*] and a connection [*waṣl*!—a separation from everything apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and a connection with Him.

I shall not yield to your deluded folly, O hypocrites, O pretenders, O liars! I am not ashamed to confront you. How can I feel any sense of shame before you, when you have no shame before your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), but behave insolently toward Him, and have so little respect for His care and for His angels appointed as your guardians? I possess a candid sincerity [*ṣidq*], with which I shall cut off the head of every unbeliever [*kāfir*] and lying hypocrite [*munāfiq*] who does not repent and return to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) on the feet of his repentance and his apology. A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “Candid sincerity is the sword of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) upon His earth. It cuts through anything on which it is brought to bear.”

Take instruction from me, because I am a true counselor [*nāṣih*] for you. I seek you for your own sakes. I am dead to you and alive in the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Those who trust me in friendship will benefit and prosper, but if anyone treats me as a liar and distrusts my friendship, he will be deprived and punished both now and in the future.

The means to real knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of Him include giving up arguing and remonstrating with Him, and a ready acceptance of His management [*tadbīr*]. This is why Mālik ibn Dīnār said to one of his pupils: “If you wish for real knowledge of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you must be happy to accept His management and His ordainment [*taqdīr*], and you must not treat your own self, your desire, your natural impulse and your will [*irāda*] as partners [*shurakāʾ*] with Him in these two.”

O you who are sound in body! O you who idly neglect your tasks! What are you missing from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)? If your hearts were aware of this, you would feel sorrow and regret. Wake up!

O my people! You will soon be dead. Weep for yourselves, before you are wept over. You have sins crowding an uncertain outcome. Your hearts are sick with love of this world and greed to possess it. Treat them with the medicines of abstinence and renunciation, and by approaching the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Religious integrity [*salāmatuʾd-dīn*] is the capital, and righteous deeds [*al-aʿmāl aṣ-ṣāliḥa*] are the profits. Stop looking for things that make you go to excess, and be content with what is sufficient for you. An intelligent person takes no pleasure in anything if its lawful use must be accounted for [*ḥalāluhu ḥisāb*], while its unlawful use incurs punishment [*ḥarāmuhu ʿiqāb*]. Most of you have forgotten about the punishment and the reckoning.

O young man! If some worldly object is present before you, and you notice that your heart is recoiling from it, you should leave it alone. But you have no heart. You are nothing but self, natural impulse and desire. You must make friends with those who do possess hearts, until you get a heart of your own. You need a wise Shaikh, who practices the law [*ḥukm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), to train you, teach you, and give you good advice.

O you who have sold everything for nothing, and paid everything to buy nothing, you have bought this world at the price of the hereafter, and you have sold the hereafter for this world. You are a delusion within a delusion, a void within a void, ignorance within ignorance. You eat as cattle eat, without investigation, without consideration and without question, without conscious intention [*niyya*], without [waiting to receive] an [inner] command or action. The believer eats what is

allowed by the sacred law [*shar'*]. The saint [*walī*] is ordered to eat, or forbidden to do so, as indicated by his heart [*qalb*]. The *Badal* does not concern himself with anything; things just work within him, while he is in his absence [*ghaiba*] with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and his annihilation [*fanā'*] in Him. Thus the *Walī* stands by the [inner] commandment, while the *Badal* is stripped of personal volition [*ikhtiyār*], and all of this is accompanied by observance of the rules of sacred law [*ḥudūd ash-shar'*]. One who becomes extinct [*fānī*] to himself and to all creatures still observes the rules of sacred law. Then he is cast adrift in the ocean of divine power [*qudra*]. Its waves lift him up at one moment, and plunge him down at another. Sometimes they roll him toward the shore, and at other times they let him fall to the depths of the sea. He comes to resemble the Companions of the Cave [*Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*], concerning whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And we turned them over to the right, then over to the left. (18:18)

They had no faculties with which to think or plan or feel. They were in the House of Grace and Nearness, with their eyes closed outwardly [*ẓāhiran*] and inwardly [*bāṭinan*]. In like manner, therefore, this nearness will have closed the eyes of his heart to everything apart from his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so that he sees only for His sake and through Him, and hears only from Him.

O Allāh, make us extinct to everything apart from You! Cause us to exist in You, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Twenty-third Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 12th of Dhu'l-Hijja, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

These hearts are getting very rusty, and the polish they need is the recitation of the Qur'ān, the remembrance of death, and attendance at sessions of remembrance [*dhikr*].

The heart does get rusty, and unless its owner takes the corrective measures described by the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), it will turn completely black. It will turn black because of its remoteness from the light. It will turn black because of his love of this world and involvement in it without pious restraint [*wara'*], because when a person's heart is controlled by love of this world, he loses his pious restraint and accumulates worldly things both lawful [*halāl*] and unlawful [*ḥarām*]. He loses his ability to discriminate in this process of acquisition. He loses his sense of shame before his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O my people! Take instruction from your Prophet, and clear the rust from your hearts through the treatment he has prescribed for you. If one of you had a disease, and some physician prescribed a remedy for it, your life would not be comfortable until you applied it. Be attentive to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in your private moments and when you are in public situations. Set Him before your eyes so that you seem to see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He surely does see you. He who practices remembrance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with his heart is the true practitioner of remembrance [*dhākir*], while anyone who does not remember Him with his heart is no *dhākir*. The tongue is the page boy [*ghulām*] of the heart, and its subordinate.

You must always go to hear sermons, because the heart turns blind when it is absent from sermons.

The real meaning [*ḥaqīqa*] of repentance [*tawba*] is respect for the commandment of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances. This is why a certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) has said: “All goodness can be summed up in two words: *respect* [*taʿẓīm*] for the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and *sympathy* [*shafaqa*] for His creatures.” If someone does not respect the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and is not sympathetic toward Allāh’s creatures, he is distant from Allāh. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) told Moses (peace be upon him) through inspiration:

Show compassion, then I shall treat you with compassion. I am indeed Compassionate [*Raḥīm*]. When someone shows compassion, I have compassion for him and I admit him to My Paradise.

What bliss for the compassionate [*ar-ruḥamāʾ*], therefore!

You have wasted your life on “they were eating... and we were eating...; they were drinking... and we were drinking...; they were wearing... and we were wearing...; they acquired... and we acquired...” If someone wishes for salvation [*ḥalāl*], let him exhort his lower self [*nafs*] to abstain with patience from forbidden things [*muḥarramāt*], dubious things [*shubuhāt*] and pleasures of the flesh [*shahawāt*], and let him patiently carry out the commandments of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), observe His prohibitions, and comply with His decree [*qadar*]. The people [of the Lord] were patient with [*ṣabarū maʿa*] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and did not patiently abstain from Him [*lam yaṣbirū ʿanhu*]. They were patient for His sake and in His cause. They exercised patience that they might be with Him. They sought to obtain nearness to Him. They left the houses of their lower selves [*nufūs*], their passions [*ahwiya*] and their natural impulses [*ibāʾ*], took the sacred law [*sharʿ*] along with them as their escort, and journeyed toward their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). They had to face calamities, terrors, misfortunes, sorrows and cares, hunger and thirst, nakedness, humiliation and contempt, but they were undeterred by them and did not turn back and abandon their journey. They did not waver in pursuit of their purpose. And forward they still march! Their

progress does not slacken. Thus they will continue, until eternity becomes real for them, inwardly and outwardly [*ḥattā yataḥaqqaqā lahum baqā' u'l-qalbi wa'l-qālab*]. (More literally: until the perpetuity of the heart and the mold is realized for them.)

O my people! Prepare for the meeting with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and feel ashamed before Him prior to that meeting. The believer's sense of shame [*ḥayā'*] belongs first before Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then before His creatures, except in matters of religion [*dīn*] and violation of the rules of sacred law [*ḥudūd ash-shar'*]. In such cases he is not permitted to be shy; indeed he should be quite brazen in defence of the religion of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and must uphold His rules and carry out His commandment (Almighty and Glorious is He).

And let not pity for the two of them take hold of you, when it is a matter of Allāh's religion. (24:2)

When someone's allegiance to the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is genuine, he gives this follower a suit of armor and a helmet to wear, girds him with a sword, adorns him with some of his own good manners [*adab*], noble qualities [*shamā'il*] and traits of character [*akhlāq*], and invests him with some of his robes of honor. He is intensely happy to have such a person as a member of his Community [*umma*], and he gives thanks for this to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then he makes him a deputy [*nā'ib*] within his Community, one who will guide and summon its members to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He used to be the summoner [*dā'ī*] and guide [*dalīl*], and when the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) took him to Himself, He showed him those among his Community who would succeed him in these capacities. They were a very few individuals, one out of too many millions to count, who would guide the people and patiently suffer their abuse, while constantly giving them good counsel. They would smile in the faces of the hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*] and sinners [*fussāq*], while scheming against them with every device, in order to deliver them from their situation and carry them to the door of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is why a certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) has said: "No one can laugh in

the face of the sinner [*fāsiq*], except one who really knows [*al-‘ārif*].” The latter may laugh in his face, and give him the impression that he does not really know him, while he is actually well aware of the ruined state of the house of his religion [*dīn*], of the dirtiness of the face of his heart, and of his many sore and confused feelings. The sinner and the hypocrite imagine that they are concealed from him and that he does not really know them. No, and they deserve no respect. They are not concealed from him. He can recognize them by a glance, a look, a word or a gesture. He knows them outwardly and inwardly, without a doubt.

Woe unto you! You imagine that you are concealed from the wise and knowing champions of truth [*aṣ-ṣādiqūn al-‘ārifūn al-‘ālimūn*]. How long will you go on wasting your lives for nothing? Look for someone who can guide you to the path of the hereafter, O you who have gone astray from that path! “*Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is Supremely Great]” to you, O dead of heart, O idolatrous worshippers of material means [*yā mushrikīna bi’l-asbāb*]! Alas for those who worship the idols [*aṣnām*] of their own power and strength, their livelihoods, their capital assets, the rulers [*salāṭīn*] of their countries, and the objectives they are pursuing! They are screened off from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). If any person sees the source of injury and benefit in any other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), that person is no servant of His, but is the servant of whomever he views that way. So today he is in the fire of abomination and separation, and tomorrow in the Fire of Hell [*nār jahannam*]. None shall be saved from the Fire of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), except those who are truly devout [*muttaqūn*], the monotheists [*muwaḥḥidūn*] who are sincere [*mukhlisūn*] and repentant [*tā’ibūn*].

Repent with your hearts, then with your tongues. Repentance is a coup d’état, overthrowing the regime of your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*], your devils [*shayāṭīn*] and your wicked companions. When you repent, you transform your hearing and your sight, your tongue, your heart, and all your limbs and organs. You purify your food and drink from contamination by the unlawful [*ḥarām*] and the dubious [*shubḥa*]. You become piously restrained in your livelihood and your buying and selling. You devote all your attention to your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). You give up your usual habits [*‘āda*] and let worship [*‘ibāda*] take their place. You give up sinful disobedience

and let obedience take its place. Then you become confirmed in reality [*ḥaqīqa*], together with correct observance of the religious law [*sharīʿa*] and its supporting testimony [*shahāda*], because any ‘reality’ not certified by that law is atheistic heresy [*ẓandaqa*].

When this has become real for you, you will experience becoming extinct [*fanāʾ*] to blameworthy characteristics and to noticing other creatures. Your outer [*ẓāhir*] will now be protected, while your inner [*bāṭin*] is preoccupied with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then, when you have attained this completely, even if this world should come along and give you control of all it has to offer, lock, stock and barrel, and if people of every age should all become your followers, none of this would do you any harm. It would not take you away from the door of your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He), because you are resident with Him, dedicated to Him, preoccupied with Him, beholding His Majesty [*jalāl*] and His Beauty [*jamāl*]. When you behold His Majesty, you disintegrate, and when you behold His Beauty you become integrated. You feel fear at the sight of His Majesty, and hope at the sight of His Beauty. You are obliterated at the sight of His Majesty, and established at the sight of His Beauty. What bliss for those who taste this food!

O Allāh, let us eat of the food of Your nearness, let us quench our thirst with the drink of Your intimate friendship, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Twenty-fourth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 14th of Dhu'l-Ḥijja, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

Do not associate the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), in His planning [*tadbīr*] and His knowledge [*ʿilm*], with your own selves [*nufūs*], your passions [*ahwiya*] and your natural impulses [*tibāʿ*], and be aware of your duty to Him where you and others are concerned. A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “Comply with the will of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in relation to creatures, and do not comply with their wishes in relation to Him. Whoever gets broken, gets broken, and whoever gets restored, gets restored.” Learn compliance with the will of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) from His righteous servants, who do comply.

Knowledge is meant to be put into practice, not just memorized and transmitted to the people. You must study and practice, then teach others. If you learn and then practice, knowledge will speak on your behalf. Even if you are silent, more will be said by the tongue of action than is said by the tongue of knowledge. This is why a certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) has said: “If a person’s glance [*lahẓ*] gives you no benefit, his sermon [*waʿẓ*] will give you no benefit.” When someone puts his knowledge into practice, both he and others should derive benefit from his knowledge, because Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) makes me utter whatever He wishes, according to the states [*aḥwāl*] of those present with me. Otherwise there would be hostility between me and you. My honor and my wealth have been spent on you, and I have nothing. If I did have anything, I would not keep it from you. There is nothing between me and you apart from the

good advice I offer you for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not for my own sake.

Harmonize with destiny [*qadar*], or it will break you. Walk along with it in its chosen course, or it will slaughter you. Kneel before it until it takes pity on you and lets you ride behind it.

The starting point for the people [of the Lord] is earning a livelihood. They take from this world according to the need, with the hand of the sacred law [*sharʿ*], until their constitutions become incapable of earning, and absolute trust [*tawakkul*] comes to seal their hearts and bind their limbs. Then they receive their allotted shares of this world, readily available and sufficient, with neither toil nor trouble. One of those drawn near [to Allāh] in the hereafter will experience the bliss of Paradise with no volition on his part. He will simply comply with the will of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in the matter, as he complied with His will in the enjoyment of the shares allotted to him in this world. Their Lord gives them their shares in full, in this world and the hereafter, because He is “no tyrant to His servants” (3:182).

O young man! According to the extent of your aspiration [*himma*] you will receive. Keep your heart far removed from everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so that you may draw near to Him. Die to yourself and to creatures, and the veils between you and your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) will be removed. (Someone asked: “How shall I die?”). Die to adherence to your lower self, your passions, your natural impulses and your habits. Die to adherence to people and their material means [*ashbāb*], despair of them and give up idolizing them [*ash-shirk bihim*]. Die to the quest for anything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Let all your deeds be for the sake of the countenance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not to seek His blessings. Be happy to accept His management [*tadbīr*], His decree [*qaḍāʾ*] and His workings [*aḥḥāl*]. If you do this, you will die to yourself and be brought to life in Him. Your heart will become His abode. He will transform it as He may wish. It will come to be within the Kaʿba of His nearness, clinging to its drapes, remembering Him and forgetting everything apart from Him.

The key to Paradise is saying: “There is no god but Allāh; Muḥammad is Allāh’s Messenger [*lā ilāha illaʾllāh; Muḥammadun rasūluʾllāh*],” today

and tomorrow, through your becoming extinct [*fanā'*] to you, to others, and to everything apart from Him, while continuing to observe the rules of sacred law [*hudūd ash-shar'*]. The nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the Garden [of Paradise] of the [Lord's] people, and remoteness from Him is their Fire [of Hell]. They hope for nothing but this Garden, and are afraid of nothing but this Fire. What agony does the Fire hold for them, that they should be afraid of it? It begs for help from the believer [*mu'min*], and flees from him, so how could it not flee from sincere lovers [*al-muḥibbūn al-mukhlisūn*]?

How splendid is the state of the believer in this world and the hereafter! In this world he does not have to worry about any situation that may arise, once he knows that his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is well pleased with him. Wherever he lands, he finds his allotted share and feels content with it. Whichever way he turns, he sees by the light of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). No darkness surrounds him, and all his signposts point to Him. All his reliance is on Him. All his trust is in Him. Beware of offending the believer, because it will act as a poison in the body of the person who offends him, and will bring him poverty and punishment. O you who are ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His special favorites [*khawāṣṣ*], do not savor the taste of slandering them, because it is a deadly poison. Beware, and again beware! Beware, and again beware of treating them badly, because they have One who guards them jealously.

O hypocrite, the doubt of hypocrisy has been attached to your heart, and has possessed both your outer [*ẓāhir*] and your inner [*bāṭin*] being. Avail yourself of the affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] and of sincerity [*ikhhlās*] under all circumstances, then you may be cured and lose your doubt. How often you all violate the rules of sacred law, dismantle the armor of your pious devotion [*taqwā*], dirty the clothing of your affirmation of Unity, extinguish the light of your faith [*īmān*], and behave abominably toward your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in all your doings. Whenever one of you does better, and performs an act of obedience, it is still mixed with pride, attracting the attention of other people, and the desire to win their praise. If anyone among you should wish to worship Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), he must isolate himself from people, because attracting their attention to acts of

worship renders these invalid. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Practice seclusion [*ʿuzla*], for it is a form of worship [*ʿibāda*], and it was the habit of the righteous before you.

You must achieve faith [*īmān*], then conviction [*iqān*], then annihilation [*fanāʾ*] and existence [*wujūd*] through Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not through you and not through others, together with observing the rules [of sacred law], with pleasing the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and with the approval of the [Qurʾān which has been] recited [*matlūw*], heard [*masmūʿ*] and read [*maqrūʾ*]. No respect is due to anyone who says otherwise. This is what is in the Books [*maṣāḥif*] and on the Tablets [*alwāḥ*]*—*the speech of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)*—*one end in His hand and one end in our hands. You must turn to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), dedicate yourself to Him and devote yourself to Him, for He will provide you with all you need in this world and the hereafter. He will keep you safe in life and death, and protect you under all circumstances with this black-on-white [text of the Qurʾān]. Serve it so that it may serve you. It will take your heart by the hand and install it in the presence of its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Putting it into practice will feather the wings of your heart, so it can use them to fly to its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O you who have taken to wearing wool [*ṣūf*], clothe your innermost being [*sirr*] in wool, then your heart [*qalb*], then your lower self [*nafs*], then your body. Asceticism [*zuhd*] starts from here, not from the outer [*ẓāhir*] toward the inner [*bāṭin*]. When the innermost being is pure, the purity [*ṣafāʾ*] will spread to the heart, the self, the limbs and organs, the food and the clothing, and will extend to all your states [*aḥwāl*]. The interior of the house must be constructed first. Then, when its construction has been completed, go outside to build the entrance. There would be no outer without an inner. There would be no creation without a Creator. There would be no entrance without a house. There would be no lock on a ruin. O world with no hereafter! O creation with no Creator! All that you are involved in will be not merely useless to you on the Day of Resurrection, but positively harmful to you. This merchandise you have with you will not be purchased from you. Here,

your wares are pretense [*riyāʿ*], hypocrisy [*nifāq*] and sins [*maʿāṣī*], but such things are not traded in the market of the hereafter.

Acquire genuine Islām, then you can do business. Islām is derived from *istislām* [obedient submission]. It means that you must surrender [*an tusallima*] what concerns Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to Allāh. You must surrender yourself to Him, rely on Him and forget your own power and strength. Whatever worldly wealth you possess, you must spend it in obedient service to Him. You must perform acts of obedience, then submit them to Him and forget about them. All your work is but an empty nutshell. All your work is devoid of sincerity [*ikhhlās*], so it is a shell in which there is no kernel, an excess length of wood, a body with no spirit [*rūḥ*], a form without meaning, and this is the work of the hypocrites.

O young man! All creatures are instruments, and Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the One who fashions them and operates them. Anyone who recognizes this is released from bondage to the instrument and sees the One who is operating it. Attachment to creatures is an abomination, trouble and pain, while attachment to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a joy, a delight and a blessing. You are cut off from the highroad of those whose have gone on ahead. There is no kinship between you and them. You have been satisfied with your own speculative thinking [*raʿy*] and have not found yourself a master [*ustādh*] to teach you and train you. O you who are cut off from the path! O you who have become a plaything for the devils among men and jinn! O slave of the self, the passions and natural urges!

Woe unto you! You have nothing to say for yourself. Seek help from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Return to Him with the feet of remorse and apology, so that He may deliver you from the hands of your enemies and rescue you from the depths of the sea of your destruction. Ponder the consequences of what you are now involved in, then it may be easy for you to give it up. You are shaded by the tree of forgetfulness. Get out of its shadow, then you may see the light of the sun and recognize the path. The tree of forgetfulness is nourished by the water of ignorance, while the tree of wakefulness is nourished by the water of repentance [*nadāma*], and the tree of love [*maḥabba*] is nourished by the water of compliance [*muwāfaqa*].

O young man! You may have had some excuse until now, since you were a boy and a youth, but you are approaching forty or have passed it already, yet you are still playing with the toys that little children play with. Beware of mixing with ignorant fools and consorting with women and boys. Make friends with devout Shaikhs [*ash-shuyūkh al-muttaqīn*] and avoid the company of ignorant youngsters. Stay aloof from the people, then if any of them come to you, treat them as their physician would. Be for all creatures like a father who is kind to his children. Practice regular obedience to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for obedience to Him is remembrance [*dhikr*] of Him. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

He who obeys Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) remembers Him, even if he does little in the way of prayer [*ṣalāt*], fasting [*ṣiyām*] and reading of the Qur'ān, while anyone who disobeys Him forgets Him, even if his praying, fasting and Qur'ān-reading are frequent.

The believer is obedient to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), compliant with His wishes, and patient with Him, careful in his pleasures, his words, his eating, his dressing and all his activities. As for the hypocrite, he pays no attention to such things under any circumstances.

O young man! Ponder the state of your affairs, and call yourself to account for what is lacking in you. You are neither honest [*ṣādiq*] nor a champion of truth [*ṣiddiq*], not loving [*muḥibb*], not compliant [*muwāfiq*], not ready to accept [*rāḍin*] and not knowing [*ʿarif*]. You claim to have real knowledge [*maʿrifa*] through Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Tell me, what is the sign of such knowledge? What wisdom [*ḥikam*] and light [*anwār*] do you see in your heart? What is the sign [*ʿalāma*] of the saints [*awliyāʾ*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the deputies [*abdāl*] of His Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*]? You suppose that anyone who claims something will have it handed over to him, without being required to show proof, and that his dīnār [gold coin] will not be rubbed on the touchstone. One of the attributes of the real knower [*ʿarif*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is that he is patient in suffering misfortunes, and readily accepts all the decisions and decrees of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances, concerning himself, his family and all other creatures.

O young man! The love of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the love of others cannot be combined within a single heart. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh has not assigned to any man two hearts within his body. (33:4)

This world and the hereafter cannot be combined. The Creator and creatures cannot be combined. Give up fleeting things, so that you may receive something that will never pass away. Expend yourself and your property generously, so that you may obtain Paradise. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh has bought from the believers their persons and their goods, Paradise being theirs for the price. (9:111)

Then empty your heart of all desire for anything apart from Him, so that you may obtain nearness to Him and be in His company in this world and the hereafter. O lover of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), turn with His destiny [*qadar*] whichever way it may turn. Purify your heart, which is the abode of the nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Sweep it clean of everything apart from Him. Stay at its door with the sword of the affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*], sincerity [*ikhlās*] and truthfulness [*ṣidq*], and do not open it for anyone other than Him. Do not devote any corner of your heart to anything but Him. O sportsmen, there is no sport [*laʿb*] here with me. O shells, there is nothing here with me except the kernel [*lubb*]. Here with me there is sincerity without hypocrisy and honesty without falsehood. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wants pious devotion [*taqwā*] and sincerity from your hearts. He pays no attention to the external appearance of your deeds. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Their flesh and blood do not reach Allāh, yet your devotion reaches Him. (22:37)

O sons of Adam, all that exists in this world and the hereafter has been created for you, so where is your gratitude, and where are your devotion, your signs of acknowledgment to Him and your services rendered? Do not falter and perform deeds without spirit. Deeds have spirits [*arwāḥ*], namely sincerity [*ikhlās*].

Twenty-fifth Discourse

On the 19th of Dhu'l-Hijja, A.H. 545, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

It is reported concerning Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) that, when he smelled a pleasant aroma, he would block his nose and say: "This belongs to this world." Here is evidence against you, O you who lay claim to asceticism [*zuhd*] in your words and your deeds. You have donned the clothing worn by the ascetics [*zuhhād*], but your inner beings [*bawāṭin*] are full of desire and longing for this world. If you were to put off these clothes and display the desire that is in your hearts, it would be preferable for you and further removed from hypocrisy. When a person is sincere [*ṣādiq*] in his asceticism, his allotted shares [of worldly things] come to him. He receives them and uses them to clothe himself outwardly, while his heart is filled with abstemiousness toward them and other such things. This is why our Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace) was more ascetic than Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) and the other Prophets (blessings and peace be upon them), although he did say:

I have been made to love three things belonging to this world of yours: perfume, women and my chief comfort [lit., the cooling of my eye], the *ṣalāt*-prayer.

He loved all these, despite his abstemiousness toward them and other things, because they were part of his allotted share [*qism*], of which his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) had foreknowledge, and so he accepted them in fulfillment of the [Lord's] commandment. To carry out that commandment is an act of obedience [*ṭā'at*], so anyone who receives his allotted shares in this manner is in a state of obedience, even if he is fully involved in this world. O you ascetics in a state of ignorance, hear and acknowledge the truth, and do not deny it. Learn

this so that you will not reject it because of your ignorance. Everyone who is ignorant of true knowledge [*‘ilm*] is satisfied with his own opinion [*ra’y*], ready to accept the words of his own self, his passions and his devil, for he is the servant and disciple of Iblīs, whom he has taken as his Shaikh.

O ignorant fools, O hypocrites, how dark are your hearts, what foul odors you emit, and how your tongues do prattle! Turn in repentance from all you are wrapped up in. Stop reviling Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His saints [*awliyā’*], whom He loves and who love Him. Do not object to their receiving shares [of worldly goods], for they are receiving at the [Lord’s] command, not through desire. There is an intensity about them in their love for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), their yearning for Him, their abstinence from everything apart from Him and their outer and inner renunciation of it all. They do have their predestined shares, however, which they are bound to receive. The most painful trial for them is their having to reside and remain in this world, their involvement with their allotted shares, and the sight of those who disbelieve Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and call them liars.

O young man! Avoid discussion about creatures, as long as you are caught up with your lower self and your passions. Die to discussion, because when the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wants you for some purpose, He will equip you for it. When He wishes, He will resurrect you, prepare you and confirm you. He will be the Demonstrator [*Muḥṣir*], not you. Surrender your own self, your speech and everything about you to His power, and devote yourself to working for Him. Be work without words, sincerity without pretense, affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] without polytheistic association [*shirk*], obscurity without reputation, privacy without publicity, an inner with no outer. Concentrate on the inner by making it unnecessary to formulate the intention [*niyya*]. You are addressing the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) directly, as you indicate by saying:

You alone do we worship, and of You alone do we seek help. (1:5)

This is addressing One who is present: “O Present with me, O Aware of me, O Near to me, O Witness to me!” You must address Him directly

in your prayer [*ṣalāt*] and other acts of worship, with this intention and in this fashion. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said:

Worship Allāh as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He surely sees you.

O young man! Purify [*ṣaffī*] your heart by eating lawful food [*ḥalāl*], then you may get to know [*ʿarafta*] your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Purify your morsel [*luqma*], your ragged cloak [*khirqā*] and your heart, then you may become pure [*ṣāfi*]. The term *taṣawwuf* [spiritual culture] is derived from *ṣafāʾ* [purity]. O you who wear coarse wool [*ṣūf*], the heart of the Ṣūfī who is sincere in his *taṣawwuf* is pure [*yaṣfū*] of everything apart from his Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is not something that comes about through changing cloaks, making faces look pale, rubbing shoulders, wagging the tongue with tales of the righteous [*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*], and moving the fingers [over prayer-beads] in *tasbīḥ* [repetition of “*Subḥāna’llāh*”, meaning “Glory be to Allāh!”] and *tahlīl* [repetition of “*Lā ilāha illa’llāh*”, meaning “There is no god but Allāh.”] It comes about only through sincerity [*ṣidq*] in seeking the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), abstinence from this world, expelling creatures from the heart and stripping it bare of everything apart from its Master (Almighty and Glorious is He).

A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “One night I said: ‘My God, do not prevent me from getting what is useful to me and does no harm to You.’ I repeated this, then I fell asleep. In my dreams, I saw a person who seemed to be saying to me: ‘And you too, do not refrain from doing what is useful to you, but do refrain from doing what is harmful to you.’ ”

Authenticate your lines of descent [*ansāb*] from your Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). If a person’s allegiance to him is authentic, then his pedigree [*nasab*] is authentic. As for your saying, “I belong to his Community [*umma*],” without following in his footsteps, it will do you no good. If you follow him in his words and his deeds, you will be together with him among his companions in the abode of the hereafter. Surely you have heard the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids you, abstain [from it]. (59:7)

Carry out what he has commanded you to do, and avoid what he has forbidden to you, then you may draw near to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), in this world with your hearts and in the hereafter with your persons and your physical bodies. O ascetics, you do not practice asceticism properly! You practice it to please your own selves and your passions, and you follow your own ideas. You must follow and befriend the Shaikhs who are familiar [*al-‘arīfūn*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), who know [*al-‘ālimūn*] and practice [*al-‘āmilūn*], and who approach the people with the tongue of good counsel and the absence of greed, turning their hearts away from you and directing them toward the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). On Him they focus and from all others they are detached.

O young man! Take your heart back to your Lord, before it is left behind you. Where the states [*aḥwāl*] of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] are concerned, you have been satisfied with talking about them and wishing for them, just like someone who grasps at water, then opens his hand and sees nothing in it.

Woe unto you! Wishful thinking [*tamannī*] is the Valley of Folly. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Beware of wishful thinking, for it is the Valley of Folly.

You act like the people of evil, yet you wish for the ranks of the people of goodness. If a person's hope predominates over his fear, he may become guilty of atheistic heresy [*tazandaqa*]. If a person's fear predominates over his hope, he may despair. Salvation [*salāma*] lies in an even balance between the two. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

If the believer's fear and his hope were to be weighed, they would be evenly balanced.

A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: "I saw Sufyān ath-Thawrī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) in a dream, after his death, so I said to him: 'What has Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) done with you?' He said: 'He has put one of my feet on the Bridge [*ṣirāṭ*] and the other in Paradise.' " May Allāh's peace be upon him, for he was a pious and ascetic jurist [*faqīh*], who acquired knowledge and put it into practice. He gave knowledge

its due by practicing it, and he gave practice its due by doing it with sincerity. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) gave him His approval for aspiring to Him, and the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) gave him his approval for following him. May the mercy of Allāh be upon him and upon all of the righteous, and upon us along with them. Anyone who does not follow the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), taking his Law [*sharīʿa*] in one hand and the Book that was revealed to him in the other hand, and who does not attain by his path [*ṭarīq*] to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), will perish and perish, will go astray and go astray. They are two guides to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The Qurʾān is your guide to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and the Sunna is your guide to the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

O Allāh, cause a separation between us and our lower selves [*nufūs*], and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Twenty-sixth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, on the 20th of Dhu'l-Ḥijja, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Among the treasures of the Throne is the concealment of misfortunes.

O you who complain to people about your misfortunes, what good will it do you to complain to creatures? They can bring you neither benefit nor harm. If you rely on them and associate partners with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), they will make you distant from Him, cause you to fall into His displeasure, and screen you from Him. As for you, O ignorant fool, you lay claim to knowledge. Part of your folly is your seeking this world without its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). You seek deliverance from hardships by complaining to mere creatures.

Woe unto you! If this ravenous dog can learn to protect the game on which it would naturally prey, and if this bird can also be taught to go against its natural instinct and give up its habit of eating its normal prey, all the more reason for teaching your own self [*nafs*]. Teach it and make it understand, so that it will not devour your religion [*dīn*] and tear you to pieces, and will not betray the charges [*amānāt*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) entrusted to it. To the believer, his religion is his flesh and blood. Do not befriend the self before you have given it this teaching. Once it has learned its lesson, acquired understanding and become tame, then you must take it as your companion whichever way you turn, not parting from it under any circumstances. Once it is tame, it will become moderate [*ḥalīma*], knowledgeable [*ʿālīma*] and content [*rāḍiya*] with the allotted shares brought to it by destiny [*qadar*]. It will not distinguish between wheat germ and barley

bread. It will be indifferent to what may fall to its lot, because it will prefer not to eat rather than to eat, in order to help you to do good, to be obedient and to behave altruistically. Its nature will be transformed. It will become openhanded, generous, abstemious in this world and desirous of the hereafter. Then, when you abstain from the hereafter and seek the Master [*al-Mawlā*], it will seek Him with you and travel with your heart toward His door. At this point, predestination [*as-sābiqa*] will come and say to it: "Eat, O you who have not eaten, and drink, O you who have not drunk!"

The sensible invalid eats only from the hand of the physician or on his orders, while continuing to behave appropriately, accepting his advice, and giving up his gluttony whether the doctor is present or absent. O glutton! O hasty one! If a meal has been created for you, who else will be able to eat it? If a garment, a dwelling, a vehicle or a spouse has been created for you, who else will be able to acquire or wear the same? What ignorance is this? Have you no constancy [*thabāt*], no intelligence [*ʿaql*], no faith [*īmān*] and no belief [*taṣḍīq*] in the promise of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)?

O handyman, if you work with a decent man, behave properly and do not demand a fortune and remuneration, you will obtain both without making demands and behaving badly. When he sees that you have given up greedy demands and bad behavior, he will favor you above your fellow workers, promote you and appoint you to be a supervisor over them. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) does not keep company with opposition and contention. He only keeps company with good conduct, composure of the outer [*ẓāhir*] and the inner [*bāṭin*], and constant compliance. Anyone who complies with the decree of destiny will enjoy lasting friendship [*ṣuhba*] with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He who really knows Allāh [*al-ʿarīf bi'llāh*] and is truly aware of Him [*al-ʿālim bihi*] is resident with Him and not with any other, in harmony with Him and with no other, alive in Him and dead to all others.

O young man! When you speak, speak with a good intention [*niyya ṣāliha*], and when you are silent, be silent with a good intention. If anyone does not make the intention before the deed, he is not credited with the deed. As for you, whether you speak or are silent, you are in

sin, because you do not get your intention right. Your silence and your speech are not in accordance with the Sunna. When you experience a change in circumstances and a shortage of provisions, you change your tune for the sake of a bite to eat, and when honor is offended you become ungrateful for every blessing, on account of the loss of one single favor. You behave like tyrants, dictating to Him: “Do...”, and “Don’t...”, and “Why did you..., when it ought to be like so?” This is remoteness, hatefulness and repulsiveness. Who are you, O son of Adam? You have been created from a nasty liquid. Abase yourself before your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and humbly submit to Him. If there is no pious devotion [*taqwā*], you are not honorable in the sight of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), nor in the sight of His righteous servants. This world is [divine] wisdom [*ḥikma*], and the whole of the hereafter is [divine] power [*qudra*].

O my people! Overseers [*ruqabāʾ*] have you under surveillance. You are in the agency [*tawkīl*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), but you have nothing to report. Be sensible! Open the eyes of your hearts. When a group [*jamāʿa*] visits one of you at home, do not be the one to start the conversation, but speak only in response, and do not ask about things that do not concern you.

The affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] is an obligatory duty [*farḍ*]. The quest for what is lawful [*ḥalāl*] is an obligatory duty. The quest for indispensable knowledge is an obligatory duty. Sincerity in practice is an obligatory duty. It is also an obligatory duty to forgo recompense for one’s good deeds. Flee from sinners and hypocrites, and join the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*]. If you find things confusing, and you cannot tell the difference between the righteous and the hypocrite, you must stay awake at night and perform two cycles of prayer [*ṣalli rakʿatain*], then say: “O my Lord, guide me to the righteous among Your creatures. Guide me to those who will guide me to You. Let me eat of Your food, and let me drink of Your drink. Anoint the eye of my nearness with the light of Your nearness, and inform me through what it sees by direct observation, not through hearsay [*taqlīd*].”

The people [of the Lord] have eaten of the food of the grace of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). They have drunk of the drink of His intimate friendship [*uns*], and have witnessed the door of His nearness.

They have not been satisfied with second-hand information, but have struggled, exercised patience, and moved away from themselves and from creatures, until they got their information by seeing for themselves. When they had attained to their Lord, He instructed them, trained them, and taught them all kinds of wisdom and knowledge [*al-ḥikam wa'l-ʿulūm*]. He showed them His kingdom, and made them aware that there is none other in heaven and earth, that there is no giver but He and no withholder but He, no cause of movement or rest but He, no ordainer [*muqaddir*] and no judge [*qāḍī*] but He, no exalter and no abaser but He, no controller and no subjugator but He, and no conqueror [*qāḥir*] but He. He shows them what belongs to Him, and they see it with the eyes of their hearts [*qulūb*] and their inner beings [*asrār*], so this world and its realm retain no value or weight in their sight. O Allāh, let us see as you have let them see, with pardon [*ʿafw*] and well-being [*ʿāfiya*], and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

O my people! Repent for having abandoned pious devotion [*taqwā*]. Pious devotion is a remedy [*dawāʾ*], and giving it up is an illness [*dāʾ*]. Repent, because repentance is a remedy and sins are an illness. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said to his companions one day: “Shall I not tell you what is your remedy and what is your sickness?” They said: “Oh yes, O Messenger of Allāh!” So he said: “Your sickness is sins and your remedy is repentance.” Sins make faith ill, and a cure for them is regular attendance at sessions of remembrance [*dhikr*] and obedience to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Repent with the tongue of faith [*īmān*], then salvation [*ḥalāl*] may come to you. Speak with the tongue of the affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] and sincerity [*ikhlās*], then salvation may come to you. Make faith your weapon when misfortunes arrive from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) used to say at the beginning of every session [*majlis*]: “Praise be to Allāh, Lord of All the Worlds!” [*Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbi'l-ʿālamīn* (1:1)]. He would repeat these words three times, pausing for a moment of silence after

each repetition. Then he would say: “To match the number of His creatures, the weight of His Throne, His own good pleasure, the scope of His words, the extent of His knowledge, and all that He has created, fashioned and made. The Knower of the unseen and the visible [*‘Ālim al-ghaibi wa’sh-shahāda*], the All-Merciful [*ar-Raḥmān*] and Compassionate [*ar-Raḥīm*], the King [*al-Malik*], the Most Holy [*al-Quddūs*], the Mighty [*al-‘Azīz*], the Wise [*al-Ḥakīm*]. And I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but Allāh [*wa-ashhadu an lā ilāha illa’llāh*], Alone without partner [*waḥdahu lā sharīka lah*]. His the kingdom and His the praise [*lahu’l-mulku wa-lahu’l-ḥamd*]. He brings to life and causes to die [*yuḥyī wa-yumūt*], while He is Living [*Ḥayy*] and never dies [*lā yamūt*]. In His hand is all good [*bi-yadihi’l-khair*]. He is Powerful over all things [*wa-Huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in Qadīr*], and to Him is the journey home [*wa-ilaihi’l-maṣīr*]. And I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger [*wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa-rasūluh*], whom He has sent with guidance and the religion of truth [*arsalahu bi’l-hudā wa-dīni’l-haqq*]:

That He may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may be averse. (9:33)

“O Allāh, bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, and protect the Imām and the Community [*umma*], and the shepherd and the flock. Reconcile their hearts in good deeds. Ward off the evil that one may do to another.

“O Allāh, You are the Knower of our secret souls [*sarā’ir*], so correct them. You are the Knower of our needs, so fulfill them. You are the Knower of our sins, so forgive them. You are the Knower of our faults, so conceal them. Do not see us where You have forbidden us [to be], and do not fail to find us where you have commanded us [to be]. Let us not forget Your remembrance. Let us not feel safe from Your cunning wiles, and let us have no need of any but You. Do not include us among the heedless.

“O Allāh, inspire us [*alhimnā*] with our right guidance, and grant us refuge from the evil of our own selves. Make us preoccupied with You to the exclusion of everyone apart from You. Separate us from every separation that separates us from You. Inspire us to remember You, to be grateful to You, and to worship You well.”

Then he would turn to his right and say: “There is none worthy of worship but Allāh. Whatever Allāh wills [*mā shā’ a’llāh*]. We have no power and no strength except through Allāh, the High [*al-‘Alī*], the Splendid [*al-‘Aẓīm*].” Then he would say the same facing to his front. Then he would say: “Do not publish our reports, do not rend our veils, and do not chastise us for the evil of our deeds. Do not revive us unawares, and do not take us by surprise.”

Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget, or miss the mark. Our Lord, do not lay upon us such a burden as You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, do not lay upon us more than we have the strength to bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our Protector, so help us against the disbelieving folk. (2:286)

Then he would start speaking about whatever revelations of the Unseen [*futūḥ al-ghaib*] Allāh might cause his tongue to utter [*yaftaḥu ‘alā lisānihi*], without notes or prepared text. In a few sessions, he would have memorized a saying [*khabar*] attributed to the Messenger of Allāh (Allāh bless him and give him peace), or one of the many wise statements that were read to him from the words of the sages [*ḥukamā’*], so he would begin by mentioning this to invoke its blessing, and start by basing his talk upon it.

Twenty-seventh Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 7th of Jumāda'l-Ākhira, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

Be sensible and do not lie. You say: "I am afraid of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)," when you are actually afraid of others instead of Him. Fear no jinnī, no human being and no angel. Fear no animals, be they vocal or mute. Do not fear the torment of this world, and do not fear the torment of the hereafter. You must fear only the One who inflicts the punishment. The intelligent person does not fear the blame of any critic besides Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is deaf to the speech of anyone other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). As far as he is concerned, all creatures are feeble, sick and poor. This person and his peers are the scholars from whose learning one can benefit, those who are well versed in the sacred law [*shar'*] and the realities [*ḥaqā'iq*] of Islām. They are the physicians of religion [*dīn*], the bonesetters [*jābirūn*] who can mend its fractures. O you whose religion has been fractured, apply to them so that they may repair your fracture! He who sent down the sickness [*dā'*], He is the One who will send down the remedy [*dawā'*]. He is more Aware than any other of what is beneficial. Entertain no doubts about your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) where His working is concerned. Your own self deserves to be treated with suspicion and blame, rather than anything else. Say to it: "The carrot is for those who obey, and the stick is for those who disobey [*al-‘aṭā’u liman aṭā’a wa’l-‘aṣā liman ‘aṣā*]." When Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) wishes a servant well, He makes him suffer privation, then, if he bears it with patience, He promotes him, favors him, grants him gifts and makes him rich.

O Allāh, we beg You for nearness to You without tribulation. Treat us gently in Your judgment and Your decree. Save us from the worst of

evils and the sly tricks of the corrupt. Protect us however You may wish and as You will. We beg You for pardon and well-being in religion and in all matters of this world and the hereafter. We beg You for help [*tawfiq*] in doing righteous deeds [*al-aʿmāl aṣ-ṣāliha*], and for sincerity [*ikhhlās*] in the performance of those deeds. Āmīn.

A man once came into the presence of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him), then kept looking to right and left, so Abū Yazīd asked him: “What is the matter with you?” The man replied: “I want to find a clean spot where I can perform my *ṣalāt*-prayer.” Abū Yazīd then said to him: “Purify your heart and pray wherever you wish!” The real meaning of pretense [*riyāʿ*] is known only by the sincere [*mukhlisūn*]. They used to be involved in it and have been delivered from it. It is a steep pass on the road of the people [of the Lord], which they are obliged to cross over. Pretense, vanity and hypocrisy are among the arrows of Satan, which he shoots at their hearts. Take instruction from the Shaikhs, and learn from them how to journey on the path that leads to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for it is a path they have already traveled. Ask them about the afflictions of lower selves [*nufūs*], passions [*ahwiya*] and natural urges [*tibāʿ*], for they have borne the pain of their own afflictions, and have experienced their own perils and pitfalls. They remained in that situation for quite some time, making progress bit by bit, until they got the upper hand over it and gained control and mastery of themselves.

Do not be deluded by what Satan insinuates into you, and do not be defeated by the arrows of the self, for it will shoot his arrows at you, because he cannot get at you except by such means. The devil of the jinn can do nothing against you except through the human devil, meaning the self and bad companions. Seek help from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and count on His support against these enemies, for He will assist you. Then, when you have found Him, when you have seen what belongs to Him and have obtained His favor, you must return from His presence to your dependents and fellow creatures, and take them to Him. You must say to them: “Come to me with all your folk.” When Joseph (peace be upon him) had gained possessions [*milk*] and power [*mulk*], he said to his people:

Come to me with all your folk. (12:93)

The person who suffers real privation is he who is deprived of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and who misses the opportunity of nearness to Him in this world and the hereafter. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in one of His Books:

O son of Adam, if I escape you, everything has escaped you.

How can the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) not escape you, since you are avoiding Him and the believers among His servants, offending them by your words and your deeds, rejecting them outwardly and inwardly? The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Offending the believer is fifteen times more serious in Allāh's sight than violating the Ka'ba and the Frequented House [*al-Bait al Ma'mūr*].

Take heed! Alas for you, O you who are always offending the paupers [*fuqarā'*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), namely those who believe in Him [*al-mu'minūna bihi*], those who are righteous for His sake [*aṣ-ṣāliḥūna lahu*], those who really know Him [*al-ʿārifūna bihi*] and those who put all their trust in Him [*al-mutawakkilūna ʿalaihi*]. Alas for you, you will soon be a corpse, dragged out and carried away from your own home. The wealth you boast about will be plundered, useless and of no avail to you.

Twenty-eighth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, on the 9th of Jumāda'l-Ākhira, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

It is reported that a man came to the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) one day and said to him: "I love you for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)!" So he replied: "Clothe yourself in misfortune! Clothe yourself in poverty!" [Meaning:] "Since you wish to acquire my attributes, to possess my character, because a prerequisite of love [*maḥabba*] is conformity [*muwāfaqa*]."

Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq (may Allāh be well pleased with him) was so sincere in loving the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) that he spent his entire fortune to support him. He assumed his character and became his partner in poverty, to the point where he did not even have a cloak [*‘abā’*] to wear. He adapted himself to him outwardly and inwardly, in private and in public. As for you, O liar, you claim to love the righteous [*ṣālihūn*], yet you hide your dīnārs [gold coins] and your dirhams [small silver coins] from them, while wishing to get close to them and to enjoy their friendship. Be sensible! This is false love. The lover keeps nothing hidden from his beloved, whom he prefers above all else. Poverty was the constant companion of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and it never left him. This is why he said:

Poverty flows more rapidly toward someone who loves me than a flood of water toward its destination.

‘Ā’isha (may Allāh be well pleased with her) said: "This world never ceased to be troublesome and difficult for us as long as the Messenger of Allāh (Allāh bless him and give him peace) was in our midst. Then, when he was taken away, the world poured down on us in torrents." So the prerequisite for the love of the Messenger is poverty, and the

prerequisite for the love of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is tribulation. One of the wise is reported as having said: “Tribulation [*balāʾ*] has been put in charge of friendship [*walāʾ*], lest anyone claim to love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in spite of his falsehood, hypocrisy and pretense.”

Give up your pretension and falsehood. Do not risk losing your head. If you are coming, you must be sincere, otherwise do not follow us. Do not offer fake currency to the money changer, because he will not accept it from you and will put you to shame. Do not fondle the snake and the lion, because they will cause you to perish. If you happen to be a snake charmer, then you may approach the snake, and if you have some special strength, you may approach the lion. The path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) requires sincerity [*ṣidq*]. It needs the light of real knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of Him. The sun of real knowledge is rising in the heart of the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*], never to set by night or by day.

O young man! Turn your back on the hypocrites, who expose themselves to the displeasure of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Be sensible and do not go near the majority of your contemporaries, for they are wolves dressed up in clothes. Take the mirror of contemplation and look into it. Ask Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to give you insight into yourself and into them. I have had experience of creatures [*khalq*] and of the Creator [*Khāliq*], and I have found evil with creatures and good with the Creator. O Allāh, deliver us from their evils and bless us with Your good, in this world and the hereafter!

I do not want you for my sake. I want you only for your own sakes. I am putting a twist in your reins. I take from you only for your sakes, not for my own. In what I am endowed with I already have all I need, without taking it from you. All I have is earning [*kasb*] or total trust [*tawakkul*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). I do not wait for what you may bring me; unlike this pretentious hypocrite, who puts all his trust in you, forgetting his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). I am the touchstone of the people of the earth, so be sensible and do not offer me anything fake, because I can distinguish your good stuff from your bad, through the helpful guidance [*tawfiq*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the skill He has given me. If you wish for salvation

[*falāh*], be an anvil for my rod, so that I may thump the skull of your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*], your natural urges [*tabʿ*], your devil [*shaitān*], your enemies and your bad companions. Seek help from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) against these enemies. The victor [*manṣūr*] is he who perseveres against them, and the failure [*makhdhūl*] is he who falls under their control.

Misfortunes are many, but He who sends them down is One. Sick-nesses are many, but their physician is One. O you whose selves [*nufūs*] are sick, put those selves of yours in the care of the Physician. Do not doubt His competence to treat what is wrong with you, for He is Gentler with you than you are with yourselves. Hold your tongues in His presence and do not resist Him, then you will see all that is good in this world and the hereafter. The people [of the Lord] are in total silence, total stillness and total awe. When they attain this state completely, and maintain it permanently, He makes them speak as He will cause inanimate objects to speak on the Day of Resurrection. They speak only when they are made to speak. They take only when they are given something. They feel happy only when they are made to feel happy. Their hearts are attached to the hearts of the angels [*malāʾika*]. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

They do not disobey Allāh in what he commands them, but do what they are commanded. (66:6)

They have overtaken the angels, exceeding them in rank and exceeding them in familiarity [*maʿrifa*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and in knowledge [*ilm*] of Him. The angels are their servants and their attendants, from whom they derive benefit. Because wisdom [*ḥikam*] pours into their hearts, their hearts are preserved from all misfortunes. These may affect their limbs and organs, their physical constitutions and their lower selves [*nufūs*], but not their hearts. If you wish to attain to their stations [*manāzil*], you must experience the reality [*tahqīq*] of Islām, then the giving up of sins, both those that are external and those that are internal, then healing restraint [*waraʿ*], then abstinence [*zuhd*] from worldly things, even those that are permissible [*mubāh*] and lawful [*ḥalāl*], then satisfaction with the grace [*fadl*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then abstinence from His grace and satisfaction with His nearness. When you are genuinely satisfied with

His nearness, He will shower His grace upon you and He will open unto you the doors of His allotments [*aqṣām*], the door of His kindness [*luṭf*], His mercy [*raḥma*] and His favor [*minna*]. He will make this world narrow for you, then He will expand it to an extreme. This is how it will be for a few individuals among the saints [*awliyā'*] and the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*], because of His knowledge of their pious devotion [*taqwā*], for they let nothing distract them from Him. As for the majority, this world is kept back from them, because He wants them to concentrate on Him, to enter His presence and to put their requests to Him. If He were to grant them this world, they might well become preoccupied with it to the neglect of His service, and might become attached to it. This is the usual case, while the former is extraordinary, and no rule can be based on the extraordinary. Our Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is one of those to whom this world has been offered, and who have not let it distract them from His service. He paid no attention to allotted benefits, due to the completeness of his abstinence and detachment. He was offered the keys to the treasures of the earth, but he rejected them and said:

My Lord, let me live poor [*miskīn*], let me die poor, and resurrect me together with the poor!

Abstinence [*zuhd*] is a righteous intention [*niyya ṣāliḥa*], otherwise no one can renounce his allotted portion. The believer is relieved of the burden of cupidity [*hirs*]. He is not greedy and does not want things in a hurry. He abstains from things with his heart, turning away from them and devoting himself to what he is commanded to do. He knows that his allotted portion will not pass him by, so he does not go looking for it. He leaves his allotments to run after him and humbly beg him to accept them.

O young man! You need a faith [*īmān*] that will lead you along the path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and a conviction [*īqān*] that will keep you firmly upon it. At the start of your journey on this road you need a purse [*himyān*], and further along it you need a faith [*īmān*], contrary to the road to Mecca. Some say that the road to Mecca requires a faith and a purse, while this road I have indicated needs a purse and a faith at the beginning and at the end. It

is said of Sufyān ath-Thawrī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) that the first thing he sought was knowledge [*ilm*]. At his waist he had a purse containing five hundred dīnārs, from which he paid for his studies. He used to pat it with his hand, saying: “But for you, they would use us as a towel!” When he had acquired learning and really got to know [*‘arafa*] the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), he spent everything he had left on the poor, in one single day, and said: “Even if the sky were a sheet of iron that gave no rain, and the earth a rolling stone, if I worried about seeking my sustenance, I would be an unbeliever [*kāfir*].”

You must earn your way and depend on material means, until your faith becomes strong. Then shift from the means [*sabab*] to the Cause [*Musabbib*]. The Prophets (peace be upon them) all earned and borrowed and depended on material means at the start of their careers, and later on they trusted [in Allāh]. They combined earning [*kasb*] and absolute trust [*tawakkul*], beginning and end, law [*shari‘a*] and reality [*ḥaqīqa*]. O you who are deprived, do not let go of earning in exchange for reliance on what people possess, and what you can beg from them. For then you will be ungrateful for the blessings of destiny [*al-aqdār*], and Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will be displeased with you and keep you at a distance. To give up earning and go begging from people is a punishment from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for His servant. When Solomon (peace be upon him) lost his kingship, He inflicted several punishments upon him, including having to beg from people. In the days of his reign he used to earn and eat well, but when the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) harrassed him, He expelled him from his kingdom and made it so hard for him to find sustenance that he resorted to begging from people. The reason for this was the fact that a woman worshipped a statue [*timthāl*] in his palace for forty days, so he remained subject to punishment for forty days, a day for a day.

The people [of the Lord] have no joy to relieve their sorrows, no respite from bearing their burdens, no comfort to cool their eyes and no solace for their misfortune, until they meet their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). This meeting takes two forms: The meeting in this world, experienced by their hearts [*qulūb*] and their innermost beings

[*asrār*], which is quite rare, and the meeting in the hereafter. When they meet their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), they receive happiness and joy, but before this their misfortunes are constant.

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also said, after speaking about the self [*nafs*]:

O young man! Do not satisfy its cravings and lusts, but feed it with pure food that is not contaminated. What is pure [*tāhir*] is the lawful [*ḥalāl*], and the unlawful [*ḥarām*] is that which is unclean [*najis*].

Then he said:

Nourish it with lawful food, so that it will not be arrogant, haughty and badly behaved.

O Allāh, let us get to know You so that we really know You [*‘arrifnā bika ḥattā na’rifaka*]! Āmīn.

Twenty-ninth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, on the 11th of Jumāda'l-Ākhira, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

When someone flatters a rich man, seeking what he has in his possession, two thirds of his religion are gone.

Take heed, O hypocrites! This refers to someone who flatters the rich, so how about someone who makes them the object of his prayers, his fasting and his pilgrimage, and who kisses their doorsteps? O you who associate partners [*yā mushrikīna*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you do not have a clue about Him or His Messenger. Surrender [*aslimū*], repent, and be sincere in your repentance, so that your faith [*īmān*] may recover, your conviction [*iqān*] may mature, and your affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] may expand till its branches ascend to the Throne.

O young man! When your faith grows and its tree rises high, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will make you independent of yourself and other creatures. He will enable you do dispense with your earning and acquiring. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will satisfy your lower self [*nafs*], your heart [*qalb*] and your innermost being [*sirr*]. He will help you to reach His door, and enrich your poverty with remembrance of Him, nearness to Him and friendship with Him.

You must not concern yourself with those who exploit this world and devote their attention to it. You must not concern yourself with those who have it in their grasp, for noticing them will become a nuisance to you, an inconvenience and a shadow of darkness. O you who lay claim to knowledge while seeking this world from its sons and groveling

before them, Allāh has let you go knowingly astray. The virtue [*baraka*] of your knowledge has departed. Its kernel has disappeared and only the shell remains. As for you, O you who lay claim to worship while your heart worships creatures, fears them and pins its hopes on them, the exterior [*ẓāhir*] of your worship is for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), but its interior [*bāṭin*] is for creatures. Your whole quest and concern is for the money and worldly vanities in their possession. You hope for their praise and commendation, and you fear their blame and rejection. You fear their refusal, while hoping to win their gifts by hanging around their doors with a lot of confidence tricks and smooth talk.

Woe unto you! You are an idolater [*mushrik*], a hypocrite [*munāfiq*], a pretender [*murāʿī*], a meddler [*mudākhill*], an atheist [*ẓindīq*]. Woe unto you! Whom are you trying to deceive?

He knows the treachery of the eyes, and what the breasts conceal.
(40:19)

Woe unto you! You stand in the *ṣalāt*-prayer and say: “*Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is Supremely Great],” but you are lying when you say these words. In your heart, creatures are greater than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Repent to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not perform a good deed for the sake of anything other than Him, neither for this world nor for the hereafter. Be one of those who seek His countenance. Give Lordship [*rubūbiyya*] its due. Do not work for praise and commendation, and neither for giving nor withholding. Woe unto you! Your sustenance [*rizq*] will neither increase nor diminish. Whatever He has decreed for you, be it good or bad, is bound to come your way. So do not concern yourself with something that is already settled, but devote yourself to His obedient service. Reduce your greed, curtail your expectations and keep death in front of your eyes, then you may prosper. You must comply with the sacred law [*sharʿ*] under all circumstances.

O my people! Have you no remnant of compliance with the sacred law? You have dropped it from the hands of your outer and inner beings, and taken to following your lower selves [*nufūs*] and your passions [*ahwiya*]. You have deluded yourselves because of the forbearance [*hilm*]

of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) toward you. Day after day He is sparing you punishment and chastisement, but in the hereafter He will bring it down upon you from all directions, seizing you and smiting you. Then death will come to you, and the descent into the grave, so you will experience its oppression and its torment and must remain therein until the Day of Resurrection. Then your physical structure will be restored to you and you will be assembled for the Greatest Review [*al-ʿarḍ al-akbar*]. You will be called to account for the tiniest details and for everything you have done at every moment. You will be asked about everything, little or much.

You are an idol with no spirit [*rūḥ*], a dry skin with neither meaningful content nor force, useless except for the fire. Your worship is devoid of sincerity [*ikhhlās*], so, since there is no spirit within it, you and your worship are fit only for the Fire [of Hell]. You need not exert yourself; if you are not sincere in your labors, nothing useful can come of them. You are one of the “toiling, weary (88:3)” —toiling in this world and weary in the Fire on the Day of Resurrection, unless you repent and make amends before the advent of death. Return to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) through the renewal of surrender [*islām*] and proper repentance, in which there is sincerity, before death comes and the door is shut in your face, for you will then be unable to enter the doorway of repentance. Return to Him with the feet of your heart, so that He will not shut the door of His favor in your face, leaving you in the care of your own self, your own power and strength and wealth, without His blessing on your entire situation.

Woe unto you! You have no sense of shame before Him (Almighty and Glorious is He). You have made your *dīnār* [gold coin] your lord and your *dirham* [small silver coin] your concern, and you have utterly forgotten Him. All too soon you must see your report.

Woe unto you! Assign your shop and your wealth to your dependents. You must earn for their sake as the sacred law [*sharʿ*] commands, while your heart should be trusting [*mutawakkil*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Look to Him for your sustenance and theirs, not to the money and the shop, then He will channel your sustenance and theirs through your hands, and will bestow His grace, His nearness and His friendship on your heart. He will make your dependents independent

of you, and He will enrich you with Himself. He will enrich them with whatever He may wish, and however He may will. Your heart will be told: "This is for you, and this is for your dependents." But how can you attain to this proposition, when you are a lifelong polytheist [*mushrik*], shut out and banished? Do not satisfy your appetite for this world and its stuff. Lock the door of your heart and make everything despair of getting inside, then let in the remembrance [*dhikr*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and nothing else. Repent again and again for your deeds. Feel remorse again and again for your recklessness and your bad conduct. Shed many tears for the way you have behaved. Comfort the poor with part of your wealth. Do not hoard it, for you will have to part with it quite soon. The believer who is convinced of compensation in this world and the hereafter will never be a miser.

Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) is reported as having said to Iblīs: "Who is the creature you like best?" Iblīs replied: "The miserly believer." Then Jesus asked: "And who is the one you hate the most?" "The generous sinner," said Iblīs, so Jesus asked: "Why is that?" Iblīs explained: "Because I am hopeful that the stinginess of the miserly believer may cause him to fall into sin, and I am afraid that the generosity of the generous sinner may wipe out his bad deeds."

Deal with this world for worldly purposes. The sacred law has prescribed earning only as a means of helping oneself to obey the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). In your case, however, you use what you earn to help you to disobey, to abandon the *ṣalāt*-prayer, acts of charity and payment of the alms-due [*zakāt*]. You are therefore interested in disobedience, not obedience. Your earning comes to resemble highway robbery. Death will come soon, so the believer will rejoice in it and the unbeliever [*kāfir*] and the hypocrite [*munāfiq*] will grieve at it. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

When the believer dies, he will wish that he had not been in this world for a single moment, because of the gracious favor he will experience from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Where is the penitent who is firmly committed to his repentance? Where is he who feels a sense of shame before his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and is aware of Him under all circumstances? Where

is he who keeps himself chaste from unlawful things [*maḥārim*] in private and in public? Where is he who lowers the gaze of both his heart [*qalb*] and his outer form [*qālab*]? The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

The eyes can indeed be guilty of sexual misconduct. Their sexual misconduct [*zinā*] is looking at forbidden things.

How often does your eye commit sexual misconduct by looking at forbidden women or boys? Surely you have heard the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Tell the believing men to lower their gaze. (24:30)

O pauper [*faqīr*], bear your poverty with patience, for the poverty of this world will come to an end. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said to ‘Ā’isha (may Allāh be well pleased with her):

O ‘Ā’isha, swallow the bitterness of this world for the sake of the bliss of the hereafter!

You do not know your reputation with the people [of the Lord]. Do they call you wretched or fortunate? Of course this lies within the knowledge of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His preordination [*sābiqa*], but you must not give up fear and simply rely on that foreknowledge and preordination, lest you deviate from the rule of the sacred law [*ḥadd ash-sharʿ*]. You must strive to do what you have been commanded to do. As for what may be in store for you according to that [divine] knowledge and preordination, this is something neither you nor any other person knows; it is one of the mysteries [*ghuyūb*]. The people [of the Lord] have rolled up the carpet of this world and moved away from it. They stand in the presence of their Master and devote themselves to His service, together with His attendants. They treat this world as a source of provisions, not of pleasures, and they do so only from necessity. They keep their physical constitutions fit for worship, and preserve the chastity of their private parts against the tricks and wiles of Satan. In this they are carrying out the commandment of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and following the exemplary precedent [*sunna*] of their Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). Their whole preoccupation is with carrying out the commandments and

following the Sunna. They are accompanied in all things by loftiness of aspiration and strength of abstinence.

O Allāh, include us among them and let us share their blessings! Āmīn.

O young man! As long as the love of this world remains in your heart, you can experience nothing of the states [*aḥwāl*] of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]. As long as you continue to beg from creatures and treat them as idols, the eyes of your heart will not be opened. There is nothing to be said until you abstain from this world and from creatures. Be diligent and you will see what others do not see. You will have experiences beyond the ordinary. When you give up what is within your reckoning, you will receive what is beyond your reckoning. When you rely on the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and observe your duty to Him in private and in public, He will provide for you from sources you could never imagine. You do the giving up, and He will do the giving. You do the abstaining, and He will supply your wishes. At the outset renunciation, and at the end receiving. In the initial stage discomforting the heart by giving up pleasures and worldly things, and in the final stage accepting them. The first is for the pious devotees [*muttaqūn*], while the second is for the *Abdāl* who attain to the obedient service of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O pretender [*murāʾī*], O hypocrite [*munāfiq*], O idolater [*mushrik*], you cannot compete with them in what you give up. They are few in number. Do not seek their states, for they will not fall into your possession. They have penetrated beyond the ordinary, while you have kept it intact, for there is no doubt that extraordinary experiences have become possible for them and not for you. They were up and awake while you were sleeping. They were fasting while you were breaking your fast. They were afraid while you felt secure. They felt secure while you were afraid. They were spending generously while you were keeping a tight fist. They were working for the sake of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) while you were working for something other than Him. They were seeking Him while you were seeking something other than Him. They were submitting the matter to Him while you were disputing and fighting with Him, for they were satisfied with His judgment. They held their tongues from complaining to

creatures, while you did not. They were likewise patient in the face of bitterness, so for their sakes it was converted into sweetness. They knives of destiny [*qadar*] cut their flesh, but they did not mind and did not feel the pain. This was because they could see the One who inflicted the suffering and were in awe of Him. All creatures can be at ease with them; no pain is transmitted from them to anyone. It is said that the virtuous [*abrār*] are those who do not hurt 'grubs' [*dharr*], i.e., tiny ants that are almost invisible. They relate to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) through obedience, to people through friendly social intercourse, and to family members through the bond of kinship [*ṣila*]. They are in a state of bliss [*na'im*] in this world and the hereafter. In this world it is the bliss of nearness [to their Lord], and in the hereafter the bliss of Paradise, their vision of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and their closeness to Him, hearing His speech and wearing His robes of honor. You need not worry about them!

You must concentrate on repenting your sins and your impudence and insolence toward your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Alas for you, shame should be felt before Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not before creatures. He is the One Existing [*Kā'in*] before all things, yet you behave modestly with the new-fashioned [*muḥdath*] and insolently toward the Eternal [*Qadīm*]! He is the Noble [*Karīm*] while others are vile [*la'im*]. He is the Rich [*Ghanī*] while others are poor [*faqīr*]. His custom is to give, while the custom of others is to withhold. Resort to Him with your needs, for He is Worthier [*Awlā*] than any other. Find guidance to Him in His workmanship. Observe the rules of His law [*shar'*] and practice pious devotion [*taqwā*] to Him, because if you keep up that pious devotion it will guide you to Him, and you will be preoccupied with Him to the exclusion of the products of creation. Be guided to Him, seek Him and let go of this world and the hereafter, because what belongs to you in both will come to you and will not pass you by. Your letting go of everything apart from Him will clear away confusions. If your heart does not guide you to Him, you are like mindless cattle. Stand clear of this world and come forward to join the intelligent folk, whose intelligence guides them to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then learn intelligence from them, and use it to get to know your own self and your Lord.

Woe unto you! Your life is dwindling away and you do not have a clue. How long will this indifference to the hereafter and interest in this world continue?

Woe unto you! Your sustenance will not be consumed by anyone but you. Your place in Paradise or the Fire [of Hell] will not be occupied by anyone but you. Negligence has possessed you and desire has taken you prisoner. Your concern is wholly devoted to eating and drinking, sexual satisfaction, sleep, and the achievement of your selfish goals. Your concern is that of the unbelievers [*kuffār*] and the hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*]. After you have satisfied your appetite with that which is lawful [*ḥalāl*] or with that which is [unlawful], what is on your heart will or will not be a liability for you.

O you poor wretch, you should weep over yourself! Your son dies and you react as if the end of the world had come. Your religion dies and you do not care; you do not shed a tear over it. Your guardian angels weep over you when they see your losses in the commodities of your religion. You have no intelligence. If you had any intelligence you would weep over the loss of your religion. You have capital at your disposal, but you do no trading with it. This intelligence and life constitute capital, but you are no good at doing business with them. Knowledge you do not put into practice, intelligence you do not use to good advantage, and life you derive no benefit from, are like a house that is uninhabited, a treasure that is undiscovered, and a meal that is left uneaten.

If you are unaware of your situation, I am aware of it. I have with me the mirror of the sacred law [*sharʿ*], which is the external rule [*al-ḥukm aẓ-ẓāhir*], and the mirror of the knowledge of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), which is the inner knowledge [*al-ʿilm al-bāṭin*]. Wake up from the sleep of heedlessness, and wash your face with the water of alertness. Then look and see what you are: Muslim or unbeliever [*kāfir*], believer [*muʿmin*] or hypocrite [*munāfiq*], monotheist [*muwaḥḥid*] or polytheist [*mushrik*], pretender [*murāʾī*] or sincere [*mukhlis*], compliant [*muwāfiq*] or conflicting [*mukhālif*], pleased [*rāḍī*] or displeased [*sākhī*]. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) does not worry about you, whether you are pleased or displeased. The harm or benefit of this will accrue to you. Glory be to the Generous One [*al-Karīm*], the Gentle One [*al-Ḥalīm*], the Gracious One [*al-Mutafaḍḍil*]! Everything is subject

to His kindness [*lutf*] and His grace [*fadl*]. If He did not treat us kindly, we would perish. If He were to requite each one of us according to what we really deserve for our actions, we should perish every one.

O young man! You offer your worship to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) despite your absent-mindedness, your pretense and your hypocrisy, and you seek His gracious favor. You try to compete with the righteous despite your faultiness. How dare you mention them and claim familiarity [*maʿrifā*] with them? O fugitive, O deserter, O exile from the circle of the sincere, Unity-affirming [*muwahhidūn*] members of this Community [*umma*]!

Woe unto you! Weep until others weep with you. Sit in your misfortune and wear the costume of mourning, until others come and sit with you. You are an outcast [*mahjūb*], but you do not have a clue. As one of the righteous [*ṣālihūn*] (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) has said: “Alas for the outcasts who do not know that they are outcasts!”

Woe unto you! What is your heart? What do you understand? To whom do you complain? To whom do you turn for help? With whom do you feel completely at ease? When you experience hardship, whom do you rely on? Tell me. I know when you are lying and being hypocritical. You and your fellow creatures are like mosquitoes in my sight. As for the honest [*ṣādiq*] one among you, I am his little slave [*ghulaim*] and his servant. If he wishes to take me to the market to put me up for sale, or to make a contract with me under which I can purchase my own freedom, let him do so. If he wishes to take my clothes and all I have in hand, or to order me to go begging, let him do so. You have no honesty [*ṣidq*], no affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] and no faith [*īmān*]. What am I to do with you? I may use you to plug a hole. You are sawdust, fit only for the fire.

O my people! This world must pass away and lifetimes come to an end. The hereafter is close to you, but you take no interest in it. No, you are interested only in this world and what you can get out of it. You are hostile to the blessings of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you get something bad from Him, you expose it, but if you get something good from Him, you keep it hidden. If you conceal the blessings of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and do not thank Him

for them, He will strip them from you. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

When Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) bestows a blessing on His servant, He likes it to be plain to see.

The people [of the Lord] have set themselves but one concern. They have expelled all things from their hearts, then installed in it a single thing unlike [ordinary] things. They have performed all their acts of worship [*‘ibādāt*] sincerely, without pretense, hypocrisy and desire to attract attention. They have truly devoted their servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*] to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). As for you, you are the slaves [*‘abīd*] of creatures, slaves of pretense and hypocrisy, slaves of creatures, of the passions [*ahwiya*], of fortune [*ḥuḏūḏ*] and of popular acclaim [*thanā’*]. There are none amongst you whose servitude is really devoted to Him, except those whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) wants, just a few individuals. This person worships this world, would like it to go on forever, and fears its passing away. This one worships creatures, fears them and pins his hopes on them. This one worships Paradise, hoping for its bliss and not for its Creator. This one worships the Fire [of Hell], fearing it and not its Creator. What are creatures? What is Paradise? What is the Fire? What is everything apart from Him? As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And they were commanded only to serve Allāh, making the religion His sincerely, men of pure faith [*ḥunafā’*]. (98:5)

Those who really know and are aware [*al-‘ārifūn al-‘ālimūn*] of Him serve Him for His sake, not for the sake of anything other than Him. They give Lordship [*rubūbiyya*] and servitude their due. They serve Him in obedience to His commandment and out of love for Him, not for any ulterior motive. They are interested in Him to the exclusion of all others, and they give up everything apart from Him. You are images [*ṣuwar*] without spirits [*arwāḥ*]. You are external [*ẓāhir*], while the people [of the Lord] are internal [*bāṭin*]. You are forms [*mabānī*], while the people [of the Lord] are contents [*ma‘ānī*]. You are a public spectacle [*jahr*], while they are a secret [*sirr*]. The people [of the Lord] are the footmen of the Prophets [*anbiyā’*], to their right and to their left, in front

of them and behind them, entitled to the leftovers of their food and drink. They put their knowledge into practice, so inheritance from them is rightly theirs. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The scholars [*‘ulamā’*] are the heirs of the Prophets.

Since they put their knowledge into practice, they are the deputies [*khulafā’*], heirs [*wurrāth*] and representatives [*nuwwāb*] of the Prophets.

Woe unto you! Do not offer mere knowledge and nothing else. Just as a claim is useless without proof, knowledge [*‘ilm*] is useless without practice [*‘amal*]. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Knowledge calls out to practice, and if the latter responds [well and good]; otherwise it departs.

Its blessedness [*baraka*] departs and the study of it remains. Its shell remains, but its kernel is gone. O you who neglect to put knowledge into practice, one of you may be clever at poetry as far as his expression, fluency and eloquence are concerned, yet be lacking in practical action and sincerity [*ikhhlās*]. If you would correct your heart, your limbs and organs would also be corrected, because it is the king of the physical body, so when you correct the king, the subjects get to be corrected too. Knowledge is a shell and practice is a kernel. The shell is protected only to protect the kernel, and the kernel is protected only so that the oil can be extracted from it. So what use can be made of the shell if it has no kernel inside it? And what use can be made of the kernel if there is no oil in it? Knowledge goes away because, once it has ceased to be practiced, it departs. What good can it do you to memorize and study it without practice? O scholar, if you wish for the good of this world and the hereafter, you must put your knowledge into practice and teach other people. O rich man, if you wish for the good of this world and the hereafter, you must comfort the poor with part of your wealth. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Human beings are the dependents of Allāh, and the dearest of human beings to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is he who is most beneficial to his dependents.

Glory be to Him who makes one need another! He has wise reasons for this. O rich man, are you running away from me? I am taking from

you for your own sake. Good will come to me from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He will enable me to do without you, and He will make you need me.

When Abraham (peace be upon him) noticed how little patience the poor man had, he used to say: “O Allāh, treat us generously in this world, but cause us to have little appetite for it. Do not keep it from us and make us greedy for it, so that we perish in seeking it.”

O Allāh, treat us kindly in Your judgments and Your decrees!

Thirtieth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of the 16th of Jumāda'l-Ākhira, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

How blessed is he who acknowledges Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) as the source of his blessings, attributing everything to Him and discounting his own self, his worldly means and his own power and strength. The intelligent person is one who does not charge any deed against Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and never demands repayment from Him under any circumstances.

Woe unto you! You worship Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) without knowledge. You practice abstinence without knowledge, and you accept this world without knowledge. This is a barrier within a barrier, an abomination within an abomination. You do not distinguish good from evil. You do not differentiate between what counts in your favor and what counts against you. You cannot tell your friend from your enemy. This is all due to your ignorance of the decree [*ḥukm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and your failure to serve the Shaikhs. The Shaikhs of practical action [*shuyūkh al-ʿamal*] and the Shaikhs of knowledge [*shuyūkh al-ʿilm*] will guide you to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). First the word and then the deed. Thus you will attain to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). No one can succeed in this without knowledge, abstinence from this world, and turning away from it with the heart [*qalb*] and the outer vessel [*qālab*]. The ascetic [*mutaẓahhid*] expels this world from his hands, while the abstainer [*ẓāhid*] who knows the real meaning of his abstinence [*al-mutaḥaqqiq fī zuḥdihi*] expels it from his heart. They [the truly abstinent] have abstained from this world with their hearts, so abstinence has become second nature for them. It has blended with their

outer and inner beings. The fieriness [*nāriyya*] of their natures has been extinguished. Their passions [*ahwiya*] have been broken. Their lower selves [*nufūs*] have been tamed and their greediness [*sharah*] has been transformed.

O young man! This abstinence [*zuhd*] is not a skill you can practice. It is not a thing you can take in your hand and throw. It is rather a series of steps, the first of which is to look this world in the face, so that you see it in the form it assumed for the Prophets [*anbiyā'*] and Messengers [*rusul*] who have preceded you, and in which it is viewed by the saints [*awliyā'*] and *Abdāl*, who are not lacking in any era. Your view of it will only be correct if you follow the words and deeds of your predecessors. If you follow them, you will see what they saw. If you are in the footsteps of the people [of the Lord], in word and in deed, in private and in public, in knowledge and in practice, in form and in content, you must fast as they kept the fast [*ṣiyām*], pray as they performed the prayer [*ṣalāt*], take as they took and let go and they let go, and love them. Then Allāh will grant you a light by which you can see yourself and others. It will show you your own faults and the faults of your fellow creatures, so you will abstain from your own self and from creatures altogether. Then, when you have truly reached this stage, the lights of nearness will come to your heart. You will come to be a believer [*mu'min*] who is fully convinced [*mūqin*], knowing [*ʿarif*] and aware [*ʿalim*], so you will see things according to their outer forms [*ṣuwar*] and their inner contents [*ma'ānī*]. You will see this world as it was seen by the detached abstainers who have gone before you. You will see it in the form of a misshapen old hag, ugly to look at, for such is its character in the sight of these people [of the Lord]. To kings she appears like a bride decked out in the finest fashion, but to the people [of the Lord] she is a mean and vulgar wretch. They burn her hair, tear her clothes, scratch her face, and grab their shares from her by force and coercion, in spite of her objections, while they are in the company of the hereafter.

O young man! When your abstinence from this world is all it should be, you will abstain from your self-will [*ikhtiyār*], from creatures, so that you neither fear them nor pin your hopes on them, and from everything your own self [*nafs*] commands you to do, so that you refuse to obey it except after receiving the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and

Glorious is He) and a compelling indication as far as your heart is concerned, by way of inspiration [*ilhām*] or dream [*manām*], while shunning and avoiding all created beings. If your limbs and organs are immobile, it is not a serious matter; this will cause you no harm. What is serious is immobility of the heart, for this is the supreme calamity [*ad-dāhiya al-ʿuḡmā*]. You can have no rest until you die to your lower self [*nafs*], your natural urges [*tabʿ*], your passions [*hawā*] and everything apart from your Master, for then you will come to life in His nearness. Death, then resurrection. Then, if He wishes, He will resurrect you for His sake. He will return you to His creatures, so that you may look after their welfare and bring them back to His door. You will come to feel an inclination toward this world and the hereafter, in order to obtain your allotted shares of both. You will receive the strength to put up with creatures, so that you may bring them back from their erring ways and carry out His commandment concerning them. Even if you do not wish for this, you have in His nearness a sufficiency and a freedom from all besides Him. You cannot be satisfied with creatures after gaining the Creator who brought all things into being before their existence. He is the One Existing [*al-Kāʾin*] before all things, the Bringer-into-Being [*al-Mukawwin*] of all things, and the One Existing after all things. Your sins are like the rains that fall, so your acts of repentance must be made at every moment to match them.

Woe unto you! You are an insolence. You are an impertinence. You are a lust. You are a passion. There must be an expression for you. Look at the dilapidated tombs, and address their occupants in the language of faith [*īmān*], for they will inform you about their situations.

O young man! You claim to wish for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and to wish for His saints [*awliyāʾ*]. Am I supposed to leave you untried and untested? I am an inspector [*muhtasib*] of your accounts, by permission of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). I chop off the heads of hypocrites who lie in their words and their deeds. I have checked the accounts of the Shaikhs on many occasions, until I obtained the proper figures. O people of the earth, you are kneading the dough of your deeds without salt! Come here and get some salt for it! O vendor of salt, come forward! O hypocrites, your dough is flat without salt; it needs the leaven of knowledge and the salt

of sincerity. O hypocrite, you are in a paste of hypocrisy, and your hypocrisy will soon be turned into a fire! Cleanse your heart of hypocrisy and you may be saved. When the heart is purified, the limbs and organs are purified and you are saved. The heart is the shepherd of the limbs and organs, so when it is in good order, they are in good order. When the heart and the limbs and organs are in good order, the believer's business is completed and he becomes a shepherd to his family, his neighbors and his fellow countrymen. His status rises higher according to the measure of his faith and His closeness to his Master.

O my people! Maintain good relations with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and be wary of Him. Act in accordance with His decree [*ḥukm*], for He has made it your duty to put His decree into practice, not to concern yourselves with what has been preordained for you. Act in accordance with this decree, and fulfill its requirements, for if you do so, the action will take you by the hand and lead you into the presence of the One for whose sake you performed it. Then you will gain from Him a knowledge you never knew, so that you will be with Him through His knowledge and with His creatures through His decree. You are trying to reach the second stage without doing what you must do first. When your feet are firmly planted on the first, only then should you try for the second. O young man, what have you experienced? How will you find the teacher [*ustādh*]? Come back here and be sensible. Acquire knowledge, then practice, and be sincere. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Complete your studies, then seclude yourself.

The believer is someone who learns what is required of him, then secludes himself from his fellow creatures and devotes himself to the worship of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He knows creatures well, so he dislikes them, and he really knows [*ʿarafa*] the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he loves Him, seeks Him and serves Him. People come after him, so he runs away and looks for Someone else. He recoils from them and yearns for Someone else. He knows that neither harm nor benefit, neither good nor evil are in their power, and that if anything of the kind is channeled through their hands, it comes from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not from them. He therefore regards remoteness from them as better than closeness to

them. He has returned to the root and left the branch. He knows that the branches are many, while the root is but one, so he clings to it. He has looked into the mirror of contemplation and seen that standing by one door is better than standing by many, so he stands by it and sticks to it. The sincere and convinced believer is sensible. He has been endowed with common sense [*ʿaql al-maʿqūl*] and so he flees from people and gives them a wide berth.

Thirty-first Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of the 18th of Jumāda'l-Ākhira, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

Anger [*ghaḍab*] is praiseworthy when it is for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), but blameworthy when it is for the sake of any other. The believer becomes enraged for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not for his own sake. He becomes enraged in support of his religion, not in support of himself. He gets angry when there is a violation of any of the rules [*ḥudūd*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), just as the tiger gets angry when they take away his prey, so Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will surely defend his anger and approve his satisfaction. Do not pretend that your anger is for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) when it is actually for your own sake, for then you will be a hypocrite [*munāfiq*] and everything like that, because what belongs to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is complete, lasting and superabundant, whereas that which belongs to any other is changeable and impermanent. Whenever you do something, therefore, you must keep your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*] and your devil [*shaiṭān*] out of it, and do it only for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and to carry out His commandment. You must do nothing without receiving an unambiguous command from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), either indirectly via the sacred law [*sharʿ*] or through inspiration [*ilhām*] from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to your heart, always in harmony with the sacred law.

Abstain from you, from creatures and from this world, that He may give you relief from creation. Wish for intimate friendship [*uns*] with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and comfort in His

nearness. There is no intimate friendship except intimate friendship with Him, and there is no comfort except with Him, after getting clear of the confusions of your lower self, your passions and your existence [*wujūd*]. Be together with the people [of the Lord], so that you may be upheld by their support, perceive through their insight, and be regarded with pride as they are regarded with pride. The King [*Malik*] will glory in you among the rest of the slaves [*mamālīk*]. Purify your heart of all apart from Him, for then, through Him, you will see the totality of that which is apart from Him. You will see Him, then through Him you will see His workings in His creation. Just as you are not allowed to enter the presence of kings with your outer being [*ẓāhir*] in a state of uncleanness, you may not enter the presence of the King of kings, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), with your inner being [*bāṭin*] in a state of uncleanness. You are a jar full of dregs. What am I to do with you? You must transform your contents and purify yourself. After that it will be possible to enter the presence of kings. Your heart contains sins, fear and hope directed toward creatures, and love of this world and its contents, all of which contributes to the uncleanness of hearts.

There is nothing to be said until your lower self [*nafs*] dies and is loaded onto the bier of your sincerity [*ṣidq*]. Then He will not mind if you pay attention to creatures. Meanwhile, as long as you continue to have an existence for them, and you notice them, you will not extend your hand toward them until they kiss it. There is nothing to be said until you are struck with awe in His nearness, so that you have something to distract you from them, from having them kiss your hand, from their giving and withholding, their praise and their blame.

When repentance is genuine, faith becomes genuine and increases. According to the people of the Sunna, faith [*īmān*] may increase and diminish; it increases through worshipful obedience and diminishes through sinful disobedience. This applies to the common folk [*‘awāmm*]. As for the élite [*khawāṣṣ*], their faith increases with the departure of creatures from their hearts, and it diminishes with their entry therein. It increases with their reliance on Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and diminishes with their reliance on any other than Him. In their Lord they place all their trust, on Him they rely, in Him they have confi-

dence, of Him they are afraid and on Him they pin their hopes. His Oneness they affirm and on him they depend, for they do not associate [partners with Him] and this they denounce. Their affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] is in their hearts, while their affability toward creatures is in their outer beings. When they are treated foolishly, they do not respond in kind. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said concerning them:

And when the ignorant address them, they say: "Peace!" (25:63)

You must keep silent and be tolerant of the foolishness of the ignorant, of their excitability of their natural urges [*tibā'*], their lower selves [*nufūs*] and their passions [*ahwiya*]. But when they are guilty of disobeying the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) there can be no keeping silence, because it is then unlawful. Speaking out becomes a religious duty [*'ibāda*], and to refrain from doing so is a sin. When you are capable of commanding what is right and proper [*al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf*] and forbidding what is wrong and improper [*an-nahy mina'l-munkar*], you must not stop short of it, because it is the door of goodness that has been opened up in front of you, so go straight on in.

Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) used to eat the herbs of the desert and drink from pools of water left by the rain, and he would seek shelter in caves and ruins. When he lay down to sleep, he would use a rock or his own arm as a pillow. The believer must do likewise, and must be determined to meet his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) on this footing. If he has any allotted shares in this world, they must come to him, so his outer being will deal with them and he will receive them all with his lower self, while his heart is with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) on the footing previously described. Its condition will not change, because, when abstinence is firmly established in the heart, it is not altered by the advent of this world and the receipt of allotted shares.

If the believer had been fond of this world, its people, its pleasures and delights, he would not have renounced it for an instant, being preoccupied with it by night and by day. He would not have practiced worship and devotion. He would not have remembered Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and would not have obeyed Him. Allāh therefore made him aware of his own faults, so he turned from them in repentance and

remorse, regretting the mistakes he made in days gone by. Allāh also made him aware of the faults of this world, by means of the Book and the *Sunna* and the Shaikhs, so he began to abstain from it. Every time he noticed one fault, he would recognize other faults, so he realized that this world is transitory, its life a short span only, its happiness fleeting, its beauty liable to alteration, its morals depraved, its influence lethal, its speech a blast of hot air. It is quick to marry [*dhawwāqa*] and quick to divorce [*miṭlāqa*]. It lacks responsibility, principle and commitment. As a residence it is like a building on water, so he will not take it as a dwelling and home for his heart. Then he progresses to a further stage and his mastery is strengthened. Now he really knows [*yaʿrifu*] the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so neither will he accept the hereafter as an abode for his heart. He would rather choose his nearness to his Master as an abode for it in this world and the hereafter. There he builds a home for his innermost being [*sirr*] and for his heart.

At this stage it can do him no harm to undertake worldly construction, even if he were to build a thousand houses, because he is building for the sake of others, not for his own sake. In doing so he is carrying out the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and complying with His judgment and decree. Allāh will appoint him to serve His creatures and to bring them comfort. He brings light to bear on darkness in cooked food and bread, but he does not eat a single crumb thereof. He receives his own special food, which no one else shares with him, so he will be breaking fast [*muftir*] at his own meal, but fasting [*ṣāʾim*] and going hungry when others are eating their food. The abstainer [*zāhid*] fasts from food and drink, while the knower [*ʿārif*] fasts from everything but the One he knows [*ʿan ghairi maʿrūfihi*], for he goes hungry rather than eat from the hand of anyone except his Physician. His sickness is remoteness and his remedy is nearness. The fast [*ṣawm*] of the abstainer is during the day, but the fast of the knower is by day and by night; there is no breaking fast [*fiṭr*] for him until he meets his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). The knower is always fasting, constantly in a fever; always fasting in his heart, feverish in his innermost being. He knows that his cure is meeting his Lord and being near to Him.

O young man! If you wish for salvation [*ḥalāh*], you must expel creatures from your heart. You must neither fear them nor pin your hopes on them. Do not cultivate their friendship and do not rely on

them. Hurry away from them all and recoil from them with a shudder, as if they were lifeless corpses. Once you are genuinely capable of this, you will truly experience tranquillity when remembering Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and disturbance when remembering any other.

Thirty-second Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 21st of Jumāda'l-Ākhira, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

Carry out the [divine] commandment, observe the [divine] prohibition, be patient in the face of these hardships, and draw close [to the Lord] through supererogatory devotions [*nawāfil*]. You will then have a reputation for being alert and hard-working. As well as being diligent and ready to make yourself available for work, you must apply to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) for helpful guidance [*tawfiq*], for it is this that will give you employment. Beg of Him and humble yourself before Him, until he equips you with the means to perform obedient service, because if He wants you for some task He will equip you for it. Having ordered you to do your part by getting on with the job, He will do His part by directing helpful guidance toward you. The commandment comes from without [*ẓāhir*] while the helpful guidance comes from within [*bāṭin*]. The prohibition of sins is external, while protection against them is internal. Through His helpful guidance you can hold fast, through His protection and preservation you can let go, and through His strength you can exercise patience.

You must present yourselves to me with intelligence, firmness, intention and determination, dispelling doubts about me and holding a good opinion of me, then you may benefit from what I have to say, and understand its meanings. O you who view me with suspicion, tomorrow it will be clear to you what I am all about! Do not try to compete with me in what I am up to; your heart will be overwhelmed and defeated. The burdens of this world are on my head, the burdens of the hereafter are on my heart, and the burdens of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) are on my innermost being [*sirr*]. So do I have anyone

for an assistant? Let anyone who is capable approach me and risk his head. Praise be to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), I need the assistance of no one apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Be sensible, and be on your best behavior with the [Lord's] folk, for they are the strangers of the tribes [*nuzzā' al-ashā'ir*], the prefects of the provinces and people [*shiḥan al-bilād wa'l-ibād*]. By them the earth is kept safe. Were this not so, what would be kept safe by your pretense, hypocrisy and idolatry [*shirk*]? Ohypocrites, Oenemies of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger, O logs for the Fire [of Hell]!

O Allāh, relent toward me and toward them! O Allāh, awaken me and awaken them, and have mercy on me and have mercy on them! Let our hearts and our physical bodies be devoted entirely to You, or at least, if the body must belong to one's dependents in matters of this world, and the lower self [*nafs*] to the hereafter, let the heart [*qalb*] and the innermost being [*sirr*] belong to You.

O young man! Nothing will come of you, but you can only be you. Nothing will come of you, but you cannot escape your own presence. Keep applying for work until He gives you constructive employment. This is how it is with you and helpful guidance: You are a job seeker and helpful guidance [*tawfiq*] is an employer [*musta'mil*], while the Owner of the work [*sāhib al-amal*] is Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He orders you to be quick to obey Him, and it is He who provides the helpful guidance.

Woe unto you! You have shackled your lower self [*nafs*] with the fear of creatures and hope pinned on them. Release these shackles from your legs, so that it [the self] may go about the service of its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and become tame [*muṭma'innal*] in His presence. Reduce its appetite for this world, for its lusts, its women and everything else it contains. If anything of the kind is held in store for it by preordination [*as-sābiq*], it will come to it without your bidding or seeking, while your reputation with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will be that of a pious abstainer [*zāhid*], and He will look upon you with the eye of respect. Your worldly share will not pass you by, but as long as you continue to rely on your own power and strength

and possessions, you will receive nothing from the invisible realm [*al-ghaib*]. A certain wise man said: “As long as there is anything left in the purse [*jaib*], nothing will come from the unseen world [*ghaib*].”

O Allāh, we seek refuge with You from reliance on material means [*asbāb*] and attachment to fantasy [*hawās*], desires [*ahwiya*] and habits [*‘ādāt*]. With You we seek refuge from evil under all circumstances.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Thirty-third Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 23rd of Jumāda'l-Ākhira, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

To see one who loves Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is to see one who has seen Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with his heart, who has entered His presence with his innermost being [*sirr*]. Our Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a visible entity. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

You will see your Lord as you see the sun and the moon, not disputing amongst yourselves the fact that you see him.*

Today He is seen with the eyes of their hearts, tomorrow with the eyes in their heads:

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (16:11)

Those who love Him are content with Him to the exclusion of all others. To Him alone they turn for help. For them the bitterness of poverty becomes the sweetness of doing without this lower world, of being content with Him and enjoying affluence with Him. Their wealth is in their poverty, their comfort in their affirmities, their friendship in their loneliness, their nearness in their remoteness, their relaxation in their weariness. How blessed are you, O patient ones, O contented ones, O you who pass beyond your lower selves [*nufūs*] and your passionate desires [*ahwiya*]!

*[Footnote supplied by the editor of the Damascus edition:] We have further evidence of this in the Sacred Tradition [*ḥadīth qudsī*] transmitted by Shuhaib (may Allāh be well pleased with him) from the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

When the People of Paradise have entered therein, Allāh (Blessed and Exalted is He) will say, "Do you wish Me to grant you anything more?" So they will say, "Have You not wiped our faces clean? Have You not admitted us to Paradise, and saved us from the Fire?" Then He will remove the veil, and nothing they have been given will be dearer to them than beholding their Lord.

[Cited by Imām Muslim (may Allāh the Exalted bestow His mercy upon him.)]

O my people! Adapt yourselves to Him, and gladly accept His workings within you and in others. Do not preen yourselves and pit your minds against the One who is more expert than you. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh knows, and you know not. (2:232)

Stand before me bankrupt of all your intellect and all your acquired knowledge. To obtain His knowledge, let your minds go blank and make no willful choice. Be helpless at His disposal, till knowledge comes to you. Bewilderment first, then awareness second, then thirdly arriving at the facts. The intention, then reaching the intended goal. The wish, then achievement of the desired purpose.

Take heed and act accordingly, for I am twisting your cords. I am twisting your slack cords and reconnecting those that have been split. I have no concern but your concern. I have no anxiety but your anxiety. I am a bird; I glean wherever I alight. The serious business has to do with you, O stones discarded, O cripples overburdened, shackled to your lower selves, fettered by your whims and passions!

O Allāh, on me have mercy, and on them have mercy!

Thirty-fourth Discourse

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

The people [of the Lord] are in the business of spending freely and making life easier for their fellow creatures. As professional robbers and givers, they plunder the grace and mercy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and give it to the poor and the needy who are in straitened circumstances. They settle the debts of debtors who are unable to pay what they owe. They are the kings, but not the kings of this world, because the latter rob and do not give. The [Lord's] people make the most of what is available, and wait for what is lacking. They take from the hand of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), not from the hands of creatures. What they acquire with their physical bodies is for other creatures, and what they acquire with their hearts is their own. They spend for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not to satisfy desire and selfish interest, and not to gain praise and acclaim.

Give up your attitude of arrogance [*takabbur*] toward the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His creatures, for it is one of the characteristics of tyrants [*jabābira*], whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will throw down flat on their faces in the Fire of Hell [*nār al-jahīm*]. When you anger the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), you are behaving arrogantly toward Him. When the muezzin [*mu'adhdhin*] gives the call [*adhān*] and you do not respond to it by getting ready to perform the prayer [*ṣalāt*], you are behaving arrogantly toward Him. When you wrong one of His creatures, you are behaving arrogantly toward Him. Repent to Him and be sincere in your repentance, before He destroys you by means of the weakest of His creatures, as He destroyed Nimrod and other kings. When they behaved arrogantly toward Him, He caused them to suffer degradation after honor, poverty after wealth, agony after bliss, and death after life.

Be among the devout [*muttaqīn*]! Polytheism [*shirk*] can be in both the outer [*ẓāhir*] and the inner [*bāṭin*]. The outer kind is the worship of idols [*aṣṇām*], while the inner kind is putting one's trust in creatures and regarding them as the source of harm and benefit. When a human being has this world at his disposal, but is not in love with it, he possesses it and it does not possess him. It loves him but he does not love it. It runs after him but he does not run after it. It serves him but he does not serve it. He divides it up but it does not divide him up. His heart is in proper shape for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and this world is unable to corrupt it, so he can deal freely with it, but it cannot deal freely with him. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said:

How excellent is worthy money for a worthy man [*ni'ma'l-mālu'ṣ-ṣālihi li'r-rajuli'ṣ-ṣālihi*]!

Or why he said: "There is no good in this world except for one who says: 'Like this, and like this..,' " indicating that he was distributing it with his hands to pious and righteous causes.

Let this world stay in your hands for the welfare of the dependents of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), but expel it from your hearts, for it will surely do you harm. Do not allow its bounty and charm to delude you, for you must soon depart and it will depart after you.

O young man! Do not ignore me and follow your own subjective thinking, because you will go astray. Anyone who tries to get by with his subjective ideas alone will go astray [*dalla*] and fall [*dhalla*] and slip [*zalla*]. When you rely entirely on your own thinking, you are deprived of guidance [*hidāya*] and protection [*himāya*], because you do not look for them and do not see the reason for them. You say: "I can manage without the knowledge of the scholars [*ulamā'*]." You lay claim to knowledge [*ilm*], so where is the practice [*amal*]? What is the effect of this claim? What is its corroboration? The validity of your claim to knowledge will be demonstrated only by practical action, sincerity [*ikhlas*] and patience [*ṣabr*] in the face of adversity, and by your not being changeable, not getting worried and not complaining to other creatures.

You are blind, so how can you claim to be perceptive? Your intelligence is defective, so how can you claim to understand? Give up your false pretension and repent to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is the One you need, to the exclusion of any other. You must turn away from everything and seek the Creator of everything. Do not concern

yourself with those who can be broken and restored, destroyed and controlled. Attend to the private business of your own self [*nafs*] until it is tamed and really knows its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you may pay attention to others. Take the highway of His purpose. Seek His company in this world and the hereafter. Make a practice of pious devotion [*taqwā*], of detachment and isolation from all apart from Him. You must always practice self-effacement [*maḥw*]. Do not let yourself be certain of anything except the [divine] commandments and prohibitions, for He has made you certain of them.

O men and O women! Saved would be any among you who had with him [or her] one atom of sincerity [*ikhhlās*], one atom of devotion [*taqwā*], one atom of patience [*ṣabr*] and gratitude [*shukr*]. I see that you are bankrupt!

Thirty-fifth Discourse

The Shaikh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) said:

Woe unto you, O arrogant ones! Your acts of worship [*‘ibādāt*] do not enter the earth; they only ascend to heaven. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

To Him good words ascend, and the righteous deed He does exalt.
(35:10)

Our Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) has mounted the Throne and encompassed the Kingdom. His knowledge is comprehensive of all things. He is the Author [*Mubdi‘*] of seven verses [*āyāt*] in the Qur’ān to this effect. I cannot erase them for the sake of your ignorance and stupidity, however much you terrify me with your sword or excite my desire for your money. I fear only Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and of none but Him am I afraid. On Him I pin my hope, and to none but Him do I look in hope. I worship Him and I worship none but Him. I work for His sake, and I do not work for the sake of any but Him. My sustenance is with Him and in His hand. Everything belongs to Him. The slave [*‘abd*] and all he possesses belong to his Master.

(He mentioned that as many as five hundred souls had come to Islām at his hand, and that more than twenty thousand had repented, and he said:)

This is among the blessings [*barakāt*] of our Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

[Allāh is] the Knower of the Unseen [*‘Ālimu’l-ghaib*], and He reveals His secret to no one, except to every Messenger whom He has chosen.
(72:26,27)

The Unseen is in His presence, so draw near to Him until you see Him and see what is in His presence. Leave your family, your property, your

town, your wife and your children, and move away from them with your heart. Leave everything and travel to His door.

When you arrive at His door, you must pay no attention to His attendants, His dominion and His kingdom. If they offer you a meal, you must not eat it. If they install you in a chamber, you must not make yourself at home in it. If they offer you a wife, you must not marry her. You must accept none of these things until you meet Him, just as you are, in your ordinary clothes, your weariness, the dust of your journey and your disheveled state. Then it will be He who transforms you, gives you food and drink, dispels your loneliness, comforts you, refreshes your weariness and calms your fear. In His nearness you will have your satisfaction, and in beholding Him you will have your food and drink and clothing.

What is the meaning of the patronage [*tawalli*] of creatures? It is making them the object of one's fear and hope, relying on them and putting one's trust in them. This is the meaning of the patronage of creatures.

Thirty-sixth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 2nd of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

This world is a marketplace in which, after a short while, there will be no one remaining. As night falls, its people will all depart from it. You must be careful to sell and buy in this market only that which will be useful to you tomorrow in the market of the hereafter, for the assayer has a sharp eye [for separating good coin from bad]. Affirmation of the Oneness [*tawhīd*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), sincerity [*ikhlās*] in working for Him, this is the currency in circulation over there, and you have very little of it.

O young man! Be sensible and do not try to rush ahead, for you will gain nothing by being in a such a hurry. You cannot arrive at the time of sundown while it is still the morning time, so why not be patient and keep yourself busy, until the time of sunset comes and you can get what you want? Be sensible and behave properly with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His creatures. Do not treat people unfairly and demand of them what they do not have to offer you. There is nothing to be said until the attorney [*wakīl*] gets the signature [*tawqīʿ*]; only then will you see the tender. Before the signing not a jot will be handed over. They will give you neither a jot nor a speck, neither an ocean nor a drop, except with the permission of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His signature and His inspiration [*ilhām*] to your hearts. Be sensible! This is intelligence! Take your place firmly before the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for sustenance [*rizq*] is apportioned in His presence and by His hand.

Woe unto you! In what manner will you meet Him tomorrow, when you are disputing with Him in this world, turning away from Him and toward His creatures? Associating partners with Him, you present your

needs to them and rely on them in matters of importance. To be in need of creatures is a punishment for the majority of beggars, for it is only because of their sins that they have had to go out begging, but in a minority of cases it is not an unpleasant experience. If you beg while you are being punished, you will be deprived by having gifts withheld from you.

O young man! I consider it more appropriate that you, in your state of weakness, should not ask anyone for anything, and that you should have nothing. You should neither know nor be known, neither see nor be seen. If you are capable of being offered a gift but not accepting it, you should do so. If you can serve and not expect service from others, you should do so. The people [of the Lord] work for Him and with Him, so He shows them His marvels in this world and the hereafter. He lets them see His kindness [*luṭf*] with them and His protective friendship [*tawallī*] for them.

O young man! If you have no surrender [*islām*], you will have no faith [*īmān*]. If you have no faith, you will have no conviction [*īqān*]. If you have no conviction, you will have no experience [*maʿrifa*] and knowledge [*ʿilm*] of Him. These are degrees [*darajāt*] and levels [*ṭabaqāt*]. When Islām becomes real for you, obedient submission [*istislām*] will be real for you. Be one who surrenders [*muslim*] to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances, while observing the rules of the sacred law [*sharʿ*] and sticking to them. Submit [*sallim*] to him all that concerns yourself and others. Be on your best behavior with Him and with His creatures. You must not treat yourself and others unjustly, for injustice [*ẓulm*] casts dark shadows [*ẓulumāt*] in this world and the hereafter. Injustice darkens [*yuẓlimu*] the heart and stains the face and skin. Do not commit injustice, and do not assist a tyrant [*ẓālim*], for the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

A crier will cry out on the Day of Resurrection: “Where are the tyrants? Where are the tyrants’ helpers? Where is he who nibbled a pen for them? Where is he who prepared an inkwell for them? Assemble them and put them in a coffin of fire!”

Flee from creatures, and try to be neither a victim of tyranny [*maẓlūm*] nor a tyrant. If you are capable of it, be a victim of tyranny and do not be a tyrant, be oppressed and not an oppressor. The help of the Lord of

Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) comes to the victim of tyranny, especially when he finds no helper among His creatures. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

If someone is treated unjustly and can find no helper other than the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will say: "I will surely help you, even if after a while."

Patience is a means of obtaining help and promotion and honor.

O Allāh, we beg You for patience with You, and we beg You for pious devotion [*taqwā*], for sufficiency and freedom from all need, for preoccupation with You and the lifting of the veil between us and You.

Get rid of the intermediaries between you and Him, because your attachment to them is a crazy delusion. There is no sovereignty, no dominion, no wealth and no might, except what belongs to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Oh hypocrite, how long will you go on pretending and being hypocritical? What do you gain from those for whose sake you practice your hypocrisy? Woe unto you! Do you feel no shame before Him (Almighty and Glorious is He), and do you not believe that the meeting with Him must come soon? You act as if your deed was for His sake, but inwardly it is for the sake of someone other than Him. You try to deceive Him, yet you implore Him to treat you with forbearance. Repent, mend your ways and correct your intention toward Him. Try hard not to eat a single morsel, not to walk a single step, indeed not to do anything at all, except with a good intention that is worthy of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you can do this properly, every deed you perform will be for Him and not for any other. It will cease to be an awkward effort for you, as this intention comes to be second nature for the servant. When his servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*] is truly for his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), he does not need to take excessive trouble over anything, because He is taking care of him. When He takes care of him, He makes him free from want. He shelters him from creatures, so that he does not need them.

Weary labor is therefore something you experience while you are still a seeker, an aspirant, a traveler. Once you have arrived, have covered the distance of your journey, and have come to be inside the house of

the nearness of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), the exhausting work is over. Intimate friendship [*uns*] with Him is now established in your heart, and you will develop until you experience it completely. At first you will be small, then you will grow bigger, and when you are fully grown the heart will be filled with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). There will thus be no means of access to it, and no corner within it, for anyone but Him.

If you wish to reach this stage, you must make it your practice to carry out His commandments, to observe His prohibitions and to submit to Him in good and bad, in affluence and poverty, in honor and disgrace, when ambitions are achieved and when they are disappointed, in the affairs of this world and the hereafter. You must work for Him without claiming the tiniest remuneration. You must work, and your object must be the Employer's approval and His nearness. Your recompense will therefore be His approval of you and your nearness to Him in this world and the hereafter—in this world for your heart [*qalb*] and in the hereafter for your outer form [*qālab*]. Work, and seek not a speck nor a seed in return. Rather than focus your attention on your work, you should let your limbs and organs make the necessary movements, while your heart stays with the Employer.

When you have accomplished this fully, your heart will come to have eyes with which it can see. Meaning [*ma' nā*] will become form [*ṣūra*], what was absent [*ghā'ib*] will be present [*hādīr*], and what was known only by report [*khabar*] will be witnessed directly [*mu' āyana*]. When the servant is worthy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will be with him under all circumstances, changing him, transforming him and moving him from state to state. The whole of him will become a meaningful entity [*ma' nā*]. The whole of him will become a faith [*īmān*], a conviction [*iqān*], a real knowledge [*ma' rifa*], a nearness [*qurb*] and a direct perception [*mushāhada*]. He will become a day with no night, a light with no darkness, a clarity with no confusion, a heart with no lower self [*nafs*] and an innermost [*sirr*] with no heart, an extinction [*fanā'*] with no existence [*wujūd*], an absence [*ghaiba*] with no presence [*hudūr*]. He will become absent from them and from him.

The basis of all this is intimate friendship [*uns*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). There is nothing to be said until this

intimate friendship between you and Him is complete. You must take a step away from creatures. They cause neither harm nor benefit, so you must pass beyond them. You must also take a step away from the self [*nafs*]. Do not comply with its wishes, but oppose it for the sake of pleasing your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), for you must pass beyond it. Creatures and the self are two perilous oceans, fires, ravines. Be firm in your resolve and pass beyond this deadly peril [*hulk*], so that you may alight in the Kingdom [*mulk*]. The first is a sickness [*dā'*] and the second is a remedy [*dawā'*]. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has sent down both the sickness and the remedy. For all diseases there are remedies in His presence and in His hand, which no one apart from Him possesses. If you endure solitariness [*wahḍa*] with patience, you will receive the intimate friendship of the Solitary One [*al-Wāḥid*]. If you endure poverty with patience, you will receive wealth. Abandon this world, then seek the hereafter, then seek nearness to the Master [*al-Mawlā*]. Abandon creatures [*al-khalq*], then return to the Creator [*al-Khāliq*].

Woe unto you! Creatures and Creator cannot be combined. Things of this world and things of the hereafter cannot be combined within the heart. It is inconceivable, it is inadmissible, and nothing can come of it. Either creatures or the Creator. Either this world or the hereafter. Of course it is conceivable that you might have creatures in your outer self [*ẓāhir*] and the Creator in your inner being [*bāṭin*], this world in your hand and the hereafter in your heart. In the heart, however, the two cannot be combined. Look at your own self and choose on its behalf: If you want this world, you must expel the hereafter from your heart. If you want the hereafter, you must expel this world from your heart. If you want the Master, you must expel this world, the hereafter and everything apart from Him from your heart, because as long as there remains in your heart one atom of that which is apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), you cannot recognize His nearness to you and cannot really experience intimate friendship and peace with Him. As long as there remains in your heart one atom of this world, you cannot see the hereafter right in front of you, and as long as there remains in your heart one atom of the hereafter, you cannot see the proximity of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Be sensible! You cannot come to His door except with the feet of sincerity [*sidq*], for the assayer has a sharp eye [for picking out counterfeit coins].

Woe unto you! You may have concealed yourself from creatures, but not from the Creator. Why try to hide? Your honor will soon be violated in people's sight, and the cash will be seized from your pocket and your house. O you who leave broken glass beside your food, the consequences will be apparent to you in your vomiting. O you who eat poison, the effect of it will soon show up in your body. Eating forbidden food is poison to the body of your religion [*dīn*]. Neglecting to give thanks for blessings is poison to your religion. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will soon punish you with poverty, obliging you to beg from people while removing all compassion for you from their hearts. As for you, O you who fail to put your knowledge into practice, He will soon cause you to forget that knowledge and make the virtue of it leave your heart. O ignorant fools, if you really knew Him, you would be familiar with His punishments. Be on your best behavior with Him and with His creatures. Refrain from saying too much about things that do not concern you. One of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] is reported as having said: "I noticed a young man begging, so I said to him: 'It would be better for you to do a job of work.' I was then punished [for this meddling interference] by being prevented from keeping night vigil [*qiyām al-lail*] for six months."

O young man! In that which does concern you there is plenty to keep you busily distracted from that which does not concern you. Expel your lower self [*nafs*] from your heart so that good may come to you, for it is the troublesome cause of confusion; once it has made its exit, pure serenity [*ṣafā'*] will come. Change, that you may be changed. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh does not change what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves. (13:11)

O human being, hear! O human beings, hear! O you who are considered responsible people [*mukallaḥūn*]! Hear, O you who are mature, O you who are sane, the words of the Maker [*al-Bārī*] (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His communications, for He is the Most Truthful [*aṣḍaḥ*] of speakers. For His sake, change that in your own selves which He dislikes, so that He may bring you that which you love.

The path is wide, so what is the matter with you? O chronic invalids, get up and take a firm hold. Work and do not slacken. As long as you are holding the rein at both ends, make use of it to your advantage. You must ride your lower selves, otherwise they will ride you. It [the self] is an inciter to evil [*ammāra bi's-sū'*] in this world, a stern critic [*lawwāma*] in the hereafter. You must flee from those who might distract you from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), as you would flee from a savage beast. Do business with Him, for those who do business with Him will show a profit. He loves those who love Him. He wishes for those who wish for Him. He is near to those who draw near to Him. He makes Himself known to those who seek to know Him.

Listen to me and accept what I have to say, for there is no one else on the face of the earth who speaks about what the text [*naṣṣ*] means in a given case. I want people for their sake, not for my own, and if I seek the hereafter, I seek it for them. With every word I utter, I have nothing in mind but the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). What do I care about this world and the hereafter and what they contain? He is aware of my sincerity [*sidq*], because He is Well Aware of all secrets [*Allāmu'l-ghuyūb*].

Come here to me! I am the touchstone [*miḥakk*]. I am the master of the smelting furnace and the mint. O hypocrite, what are you raving on about? Your raving is futile. So often you say "I", but who are you? Woe unto you! You see someone other than Him, yet you say: "I see Him!" You befriend someone other than Him, yet you say: "I am befriending Him!" You call your lower self [*nafs*] content, but this is a contradiction. You call it patient, yet a flea can disturb you and prove you an unbeliever.

There is nothing to be said until your flesh becomes dead to all its many agonies and sufferings, so that the scissors of misfortune do not cause it pain. The whole of you will then become a retreat in which your heart can withdraw from this world and the hereafter, so that it will be in a state of nonexistence [*adam*] in relation to them both and to all they contain. Your existence [*wujūd*] will then consist in the carrying out of the commandments and the observance of the prohibitions [of the Lord], for He will cause you to exist and to act, setting you in motion and bringing you to rest, while you are in His invisible realm [*ghaiba*] with Him.

No station [*maqām*] will be secured for you until you have truly attained this station. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) does not seek from His servant his outer form [*ṣūra*]; He seeks only his inner content [*ma' nā*], meaning his affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*], his sincerity [*ikhhlāṣ*], the removal of the love of this world and the hereafter from his heart, and that all things should be in a state of separation from him. When he has accomplished this completely, He loves him, draws him near [to Himself] and exalts him above others.

O Unique One [*Wāḥid*], make us uniquely Yours! Deliver us from creatures and choose us for Yourself. Certify our claims with the proof of Your grace and Your mercy. Gladden our hearts and ease our affairs. Let our companionship be with You and our loneliness with those who are apart from You. Let our concerns be but one concern, namely our concern with You, and grant us nearness to You in this world and the hereafter.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Thirty-seventh Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 5th of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Visit the sick and escort the funeral processions, for it will remind you of the hereafter.

The Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) meant by this that you ought to remember the hereafter, but you flee from the recollection of it and you love the temporal life [*al-‘ājila*]. From this you will soon be separated, not at your own command. You will be dispossessed of all that you now enjoy. You will come to feel disgust. You will come to feel grief [*tarah*] instead of joy [*farah*].

O heedless one, O ruffian, come to your senses! You were not created for this world; you were created only for the hereafter. O you who are neglectful of your essential needs, you have focused your interest on carnal appetites and pleasures, on piling one *dīnār* [gold coin] upon another, and you have devoted your limbs and organs to fun and games. If someone reminds you of the hereafter and death, you turn your head this way and that, saying: “You make my life a misery!” The herald of death has already come to you, in the form of the grayness in your hair, although you may trim it and tint it with black. When your appointed hour arrives, what will you do then? When the angel of death comes to you, accompanied by his assistants, with what will you stave him off? When your sustenance is discontinued and your span is terminated, what trick will you try to play?

Give up this craziness. This world is built upon work. If you labor in it, you will receive the remuneration, and if you do not work you will

not receive. It is the domain of deeds and the endurance of adversities. It is the domain of toil, while the hereafter is the domain of relaxation. The believer [*mu'min*] makes his lower self [*nafs*] weary in this world, so he will surely find his rest. As for you, you want comfort in a hurry, but you take your time where repentance is concerned. You procrastinate day after day, month after month, year after year, until your term has expired. Soon you will be sorry for not having taken good counsel [*naṣīḥa*], for not having paid attention and accepted sincere advice.

Woe unto you! The supporting beam of the roof of your life has been broken. O deluded one, the walls of your life are caving in. This house in which you are residing will be demolished. You must be transferred from it to another one. Seek the house of the hereafter and move your legs toward it. What are these legs? The legs of righteous deeds! Forward your wealth to the hereafter, so that you may find it when you arrive there.

O you who are deluded by this world! O you who are preoccupied with nothing! O you who forsake the concubine [*surriyya*] and devote your attention to the serving wench! Woe unto you! The hereafter is not available in combination, because she is not willing to accept a maidservant. Expel her [the maid] from your heart, then you will see how the hereafter comes to you and takes possession of your heart. When you have accomplished this, you will hear the call of nearness to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so then you must let go of the hereafter and seek that nearness. Once there, the well-being of the heart and the serenity of the innermost [*sirr*] will come to perfection.

O young man! When your heart becomes sound, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), the angels and the masters of knowledge [*ulu'l-'ilm*] will bear witness. An attorney will be appointed to plead your case and he will testify for you, so you will not need to give evidence of its soundness on your own behalf. When this has been accomplished for you, you will come to be a mountain that winds [*riyāḥ*] cannot blow away and that spears [*rimāḥ*] cannot destroy. Seeing and mingling with creatures will not affect you, will scratch no mark on your heart, and will not disturb the serenity of your innermost being [*sirr*].

O my people! Have nothing to do with anyone who does a deed to win the favor of creatures and their acceptance of it, for he is a fugitive slave, an enemy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), unbelieving

in Him and His blessings, an outcast, loathsome and accursed. Creatures plunder the heart, goodness and religion [*dīn*]. They make you their idolater [*mushrik*], forgetful of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). They want you for themselves, not for your sake, whereas the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wants you for your own sake, not for His. So seek the One who wants you for your sake. Devote yourself to Him, for it is much better to be preoccupied with Him than with those who want you for themselves. If you have no alternative to seeking, seek from Him, not from His creatures, for the most hateful of creatures in the sight of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is one who seeks this world from His creatures. Appeal to Him for help. He is Rich [*al-Ghani*] and all creatures are poor. They possess no power to cause harm or benefit, neither to themselves nor to others. Seek Him and wish for Him, for He wishes for you. In the beginning you will be a seeker [*murīd*] and He the sought [*murād*], and in the end you will be sought while He is the Seeker. When the child is in his infancy, he tries to find his mother, then when he grows up his mother tries to find him. When He recognizes the sincerity [*ṣidq*] of your wish for Him, He will wish for you. When He recognizes the sincerity of your love for Him, He will love you, guide your heart and draw you near to Him.

How can you succeed when you have kept the hand of your lower self [*nafs*], of your passions [*hawā*], your natural urges [*ṭabʿ*] and your devil [*shaitān*], over the eyes of your heart? Move these hands aside and you may see things as they are. Move your lower self aside by struggling with it and opposing it. Move aside the hand of your passions, your natural urges and your devil, for then you will find Him. Move these hands aside and you will have removed the veils between you and your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so you will see through Him that which is apart from Him. You will see yourself and you will see others. You will see your faults and so avoid them. You will see the faults of others and so escape from them. Then, when you have accomplished this, He will draw you near and give you that which no eye has ever seen and no ear has ever heard of, and which has never occurred to the human heart. He will sharpen the hearing of your heart and your innermost being [*sirr*], and their sight. He will rectify them, clothe them and invest them with the robes of His honor. He will confer His authority upon you,

appoint you [to high office], make you a sultan and a king, and let you go freely among the rest of His creatures. He will make you the guardian of your heart, assign His angels to your service and show you the spirits [*arwāh*] of His Prophets [*anbiyā'*] and His Messengers [*rusul*], so nothing will be kept secret from you in the whole of creation.

O young man! You must seek this station [*maqām*], aspire to it and make it your ambition. You must give up your preoccupation with the quest for this world, for it will never satisfy you. Nor will you be satisfied with anything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so concentrate on Him, for He will satisfy you. When you have Him, you have everything you need in this world and the hereafter. O heedless one, wish for Him who wishes for you, seek Him who seeks you, love Him who loves you, and yearn for Him who yearns for you. Surely you have heard His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

He loves them and they love Him. (5:54)

And His saying [not in the Qur'ān]:

Surely I am yearning to meet you.

He has created you for His worshipful service [*'ibāda*], so do not play about. He wants you for His companionship, so do not pay attention to others. In loving Him you must love no one together with Him. If you love someone other than Him with the love of compassion [*ra'fa*] and mercy [*rahma*] and kindness [*lutf*], this is permissible. With the love of the ordinary feelings [*hubb an-nufūs*] it is permissible. With the love of hearts [*hubb al-qulūb*], however, it is not permissible. With the love of the innermost being it is not permissible. When the heart of Adam (peace be upon him) became preoccupied with the love of Paradise, and he loved to dwell therein, His Lord parted him from it and expelled him from it by way of the eating of the fruit. When his heart inclined toward Eve, He parted him from her and set between the pair of them a distance of three hundred years, he being in Sarandīb [the island now called Sri Lanka] and she in Jidda.*

When Jacob became very attached to his son Joseph (peace be upon them both), He brought about a separation between them. And when

*[Footnote supplied by the editor of the printed Arabic text (Damascus edition):] "A distance of three hundred years"—thus in the manuscript in my hands, but it bears examination since Sarandīb is in the Indian Ocean, on an island called the Island of Sarandīb, and it is no secret that the distance between India and Jidda is not great.

our Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) developed a certain kind of affection for ‘Ā’isha (may Allāh be well pleased with her), she suffered an experience that exposed her to calumny and slander, and he went for several days without seeing her.

You must therefore devote all your attention to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and to no other. You must not be intimately friendly with anyone but Him. Set creatures outside of your heart, away from Him. Keep it empty for Him.

Oidler, O lazybones, O unreceptive one! If you would take instruction from me and learn from what I have to say, you would put it into practice for your own sake. If you do not take action, you will bring displeasure and deprivation upon your own self. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

To its credit is what it is what it has earned, and against it is what it has deserved. (2:286)

He has also said (Exalted is He):

If you do good, it is your own selves you do good to, and if you do evil it is to them likewise. (17:7)

Tomorrow they will encounter the reward for their deeds in the Gardens [of Paradise] and the punishment for their deeds in the Fires [of Hell]. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Feed the pious devotees [*atqiyā*] with your food, and give your cloaks to the believers.

Thirty-eighth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 7th of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Wear out your devils by saying: “There is no god but Allāh; Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh [*Lā ilāha illa’llāh; Muḥammadun rasūlu’llāh*],” for the devil will be worn out by this, just as one of you may wear out his camel by riding it a lot and making it carry his burdens.

O my people! Wear out your devils by being sincere in saying: “There is no god but Allāh,” not merely with the words themselves. The affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] burns devils both human and jinn, because it is fire [*nār*] to devils and light [*nūr*] to those who affirm Unity [*muwāḥḥidūn*]. How can you say: “There is no god but Allāh,” when there is many a god [*ilāh*] in your heart? Everything you rely upon and trust, apart from Allāh, is your idol [*ṣanam*]. It will do you no good to make the affirmation of Unity with your tongue, while at the same time being guilty of idolatry in your heart. You cannot benefit from purity of the outer form [*qālab*] accompanied by defilement of the heart [*qalb*]. He who affirms Unity wears out his devil, but in the case of the idolater [*mushrik*] it is his devil that wears him out. Sincerity [*ikhhlās*] is the kernel of words and deeds, because when they are empty of it they are a shell with no kernel. The shell is good for nothing but the fire.

Hear what I have to say and act upon it, for it will extinguish the fire of your natural impulses [*ṭab’*] and break the thorn of your lower self [*naḥs*]. You must not visit any place where the fire of your natural urges gets stirred up, for it will destroy the house of your religion [*dīn*] and your faith [*īmān*]. The natural urges, the passions [*hawā*] and the devil [*shaiṭān*] are stimulated, and away they go with your religion, your faith and your

conviction [*iqān*]. Do not listen to the talk of these affected and fanciful hypocrites, for the natural inclination is to let oneself be taken in by fanciful, foolishly pretentious talk. Just like unleavened dough without salt, it will hurt the stomach of one who eats it, and wreck his physical fitness.

Knowledge is taken from the mouths of men, not from the pages of books. Among these men are the men of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), the piously devoted ones [*muttaqūn*], the abstinent ones [*tārikūn*], the inheritors [*wāriṭhūn*], the knowers [*ʿārifūn*], the practicing ones [*ʿāmilūn*], the sincere [*mukhlīṣūn*]. Apart from pious devotion [*taqwā*] there is only delusion and vanity. Sovereignty belongs to the piously devoted, in this world and the hereafter. The foundation and the building belong to them in this world and the hereafter. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) loves only those of His servants who are piously devoted, beneficent [*muḥsinūn*] and patient [*ṣābirūn*]. If you had the right idea [*khāṭir ṣaḥīḥ*], you would know them, love them and befriend them. One gets the right ideas only when the heart is illumined by direct knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You should not trust an idea that occurs to you until you really have that knowledge, and the goodness and soundness of it are clearly apparent to you.

Lower your eyes from the sight of forbidden things, and restrain yourself from carnal desires. Accustom yourself to eating lawful food [*ḥalāl*]. Safeguard your inner [*bāṭin*] by maintaining an awareness of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and your outer [*ẓāhir*] by following the Sunna. Then you may receive a sound and correct idea, and have true knowledge through Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

I educate only intellects [*ʿuqūl*] and hearts [*qulūb*]. As for lower selves [*nufūs*], natural impulses [*ṭibāʿ*] and habits [*ʿādāt*], no, they are not my business.

O young man! You must acquire knowledge and practice sincerity until you escape the net of hypocrisy and its bonds. Seek knowledge [*ilm*] for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not for the sake of His creatures and not for the sake of this lower world of His. The token of your seeking knowledge for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is your fear and trembling at the advent of His command

and prohibition. You must remain aware of Him and be submissive to Him within your own self. You must behave humbly toward creatures, without needing them and without coveting what they possess. It must be for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) that you treat people as friends or as enemies, because friendship for the sake of anything but Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is enmity. Loyalty to any other cause is desertion. Giving to any other cause is deprivation. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Faith is two halves: One half is patience [*ṣabr*] and one half is gratitude [*shukr*].

If you are not patient in the face of adversities [*niqam*] and are not grateful for blessings [*ni'am*], you are not a believer [*mu'min*], and part of the reality [*ḥaqīqa*] of Islām is obedient submission [*istislām*]. O Allāh, enliven our hearts with absolute trust [*tawakkul*] in You, with obedience [*ṭā'a*] to You, with remembrance [*dhikr*] of You, with compliance [*muwāfaqa*] with Your wishes, and with the affirmation of Your Oneness [*tawḥīd*]. Were it not for certain men, scattered over the earth, who have this life in their hearts, you would perish, because the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) averts His chastisement from the people of the earth in response to their plea. The outer form [*ṣūra*] of Prophethood [*nubuwwa*] has disappeared from view, but its inner content [*ma'nā*] will remain till the Day of Resurrection. If it were not so, for what reason would forty of them remain on the earth? When someone is imbued with one of the qualities [*ma'nā min ma'ānī*] of Prophethood, his heart is like the heart of one of the Prophets. Among them are the vicegerents [*khulafā'*] of Allāh and His messengers [*rusul*] on the earth. He has appointed the servants [*ghilmān*] to deputize for the masters [*ustādhūn*]. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets [*al-ʿulamā'u warathatu 'l-anbiyā'*].

They are heirs in preservation, in practice, in word and in deed, because words without deeds are worth nothing, and a naked claim without evidence does not amount to anything.

O young man! Your evidence must be close adherence to the Book and the Sunna, putting them into practice, and sincerity in that practice. I see your 'scholars' as ignorant men, your 'ascetics' [*zuḥhād*]

as people seeking this world and desirous of it, putting all their trust in creatures and forgetting the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Confidence in any other than the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the cause of damnation. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Accursed, accursed is he whose trust [*thiqa*] is in a creature like himself.

He also said (blessing and peace be upon him):

Anyone who glories in a creature is worthy of contempt.

Woe unto you! When you take your leave of creatures you will come to be with the Creator. He will make you aware of what is due to you and what you owe, so you will be able to differentiate between what belongs to you and what belongs to others. You must stick with firmness and constancy to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and must sever attachments from your heart, then you may experience goodness both here and now and in the future. This is something that cannot be accomplished as long as creatures and pretence [*riyā'*] are within your heart, and as long as the hereafter and things apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) are in your heart, even in the tiniest quantity. If you are not patient, you have no religion [*dīn*]. Your faith has no head. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Patience is to faith as the head is to the body.

The meaning of patience is that you should not complain to anyone, should not be attached to any material means [*sabab*], should not hate the existence of misfortune and should not love to have it go away. When the servant behaves humbly toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) while his state is one of poverty and neediness, when he is patient with Him in compliance with His will [*murād*], is not too proud to conduct himself in the manner permitted [*mubāh*], and brings light to bear on the darkness through worshipful service [*ibāda*] and earning [*kasb*], He looks upon him with the eye of mercy [*rahma*], enriches him and enriches his dependents from a quarter that was never within his reckoning. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Whoever is dutiful toward Allāh, He prepares a way out for him, and provides for him from sources he could never imagine. (65:2,3)

You are like the cupper [*hajjām*; blood-letting physician]. You extract the sickness from others, but there is a full-blooded sickness in you which you do not extract. I see you increasing in outer knowledge and inner ignorance. As it is written in the Torah:

He who increases in knowledge, let him also increase in suffering.

What is this suffering? It is fear of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and humility toward Him and His servants. If you have no knowledge, you must study. If you have no knowledge, no practice, no sincerity, no good manners and no good opinion of the Shaikhs, how is anything going to come of you? You have focused your interest on this world and its rubbish. Very soon you will be separated from it. Where do you stand in relation to the people [of the Lord] whose interest is but one, who remain aware of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) inwardly [*fī bawāṭinihim*] as they remain aware of Him outwardly [*fī ṣawāhirihi*]? They train the heart as they train the physical body, until, when this process of development is complete, He relieves them entirely of all interest in carnal desires, so there remains in their hearts but one single desire, namely the quest for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), nearness to Him and His love; that is all.

It is related that the Children of Israel were afflicted by a calamity, so they went together to meet one of their Prophets [*anbiyā'*] and said to him: "Tell us how to win the good pleasure of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so that we may follow it through as a means by which to rid ourselves of this calamity." So he asked the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) about this, and Allāh told him by inspiration [*awḥā ilayhi*]:

Say to them: "If you wish for My good pleasure, you must please the needy, for if you please them I shall be well pleased, and if you displease them I shall be displeased."

Take heed, O intelligent ones! You are always displeasing the needy, yet you wish for the good pleasure of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Far from obtaining His good pleasure, you live and move in His displeasure. You must be steadfast despite the harshness of my speech, then you may succeed. Steadfastness [*thubāt*] is a growing plant [*nabāt*]. I would never run away from the coarseness and harshness of the Shaikhs; I just held my tongue and shut my eyes. As blasts from them

descended on me, I would just keep quiet. As for you, you cannot endure what they have to say, yet you wish to succeed. No, of course not! You will not succeed until you conform to the decree of destiny [*qadar*], for you and against you. You must keep company with the Shaikhs, while discarding speculations about your fortune and fate, and you must follow them and remain in harmony with them under all circumstances, then success [*falāh*] will come to you in this world and the hereafter.

Understand what I am saying and put it into practice! Understanding without practice does not amount to anything. Practice without sincerity [*ikhilās*] is empty ambition [*tamaʿ*]. All the letters in [the word] *tamaʿ* [as written in the Arabic script] are empty and hollow; there is nothing inside them! The general public may not recognize your counterfeiting, but the money changer will recognize it, then he will inform the general public so they will be on their guard against you. If you were patient with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you would see the marvels of His grace. When Joseph (peace be upon him) patiently endured captivity, enslavement, imprisonment and degradation, and complied with the working of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), his nobility was confirmed and he became a king, passing from degradation to glory, from death to life. Thus it can be for you. If you will follow the sacred law [*sharʿ*], be patient with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), look to Him in fear and hope, and oppose your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*] and your devil [*shaitān*], you will move on from this present situation of yours to one quite different. You will progress from what you dislike to what you love. Struggle and work hard, for although you cannot get there on your own, you must play your part. Work hard, then good may come to you. He who seeks and makes a serious effort will surely find [*man ṭalaba wa-jadda wajada*]. You must try hard to eat lawful food [*halāl*], for it will enlighten your heart and bring it out of its dark shadows. The most useful intelligence is that which makes you aware of the blessings of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), prompts you to give thanks for them, and helps you to acknowledge them in due measure.

O young man! When someone becomes aware, through the eye of certainty [*ʿain al-yaqīn*], that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has

allotted all things and has finished with them, he will feel too ashamed to seek anything from Him. He will be too preoccupied with remembering Him to go making requests of Him. He will not ask Him to speed up his own allotment, nor to give him the portion allotted to another. His normal mode of conduct will be unobtrusiveness, taciturnity, good manners and nonconfrontation. He will not complain to creatures, be it about little or much. Begging from creatures with the heart is like begging from them with the tongue; in my view there is no difference between them from the standpoint of reality [*ḥaqīqa*].

Woe unto you! Do you not feel ashamed to seek things from any other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), when He is nearer to you than any other? You seek from creatures things of which you have no need. You have with you a buried treasure, yet you compete with the poor for a grain and a seed. When you die you will be exposed. All that you have kept secret and concealed will be put on display, and damnation will seize you from every side. If you were sensible, you would acquire an atom of faith [*īmān*] with which to meet Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You would keep company with the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] and let yourself be guided by them, by their words and their deeds, so that, when your faith matured and your conviction [*iqān*] became fully developed, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) would select you for Himself and take charge of your education, instructing you what you must do and must not do as far as your heart is concerned.

O worshipper [*‘ābid*] of the idol [*sanam*] of pretence, you cannot detect the scent of the nearness of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not in this world and not in the hereafter. O idolater [*mushrik*] of creatures, devoting your heart to them, you must turn your back on them, because from them comes neither harm nor benefit, neither giving nor withholding. Do not claim to affirm the Oneness [*tawḥīd*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) while polytheism [*shirk*] is clinging to your heart, for you will gain nothing from it.

Thirty-ninth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 12th of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

If you wish for sovereignty [*mulk*] in this world and the hereafter, you must dedicate the whole of you to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you will become a commander [*amīr*] and chief [*ra'īs*] over yourself and over others. I have counseled you well, so accept my good counsel. I have advised you sincerely, so accept my sincere advice. If you lie and accuse of lying, you will be considered a liar and be lied to [*idhā kadhabta wa-kadhdhabta kudhhibta wa-kudhiba laka*], while if you tell the truth and accept the truth, you will be considered truthful and be told the truth [*idhā ṣadaqta wa-ṣaddaqta ṣuddiqta wa-ṣudiqa laka*]. [In the words of the proverb:] “As you repay, so will you be repaid [*kamā tudīnu tudānu*].”

Receive from me a remedy for the sickness of your religion [*dīn*] and apply it, then its health will be restored. Our predecessors used to wander throughout the East and the West in search of the saints [*awliyā'*] and the righteous ones [*ṣāliḥūn*], who are the physicians of hearts and of religion. When they encountered one of them, they would seek from him a remedy for their religions [*adyān*]. But to you, nowadays, there is nothing more hateful than the experts in [Islāmic] jurisprudence [*fuqahā'*], the scholars [*ulamā'*] and the saints [*awliyā'*], who are the educators and teachers, so the remedy will certainly not come into your possession. What is the use of my knowledge and my medicine where you are concerned? Every day I build a foundation for you, and you knock it down. I prescribe a remedy for you, and you fail to apply it. I tell you: “Do not eat this piece of food, which contains a poison. Eat this, which contains a remedy,” but you contradict me and eat the one that has the poison in it. The result will soon show up in the physical condition of your religion and your faith.

I have counseled you well, although I am not scared of your sword and I do not want your gold. He who is with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is not scared of anyone at all, not of jinn, not of human beings, not of the vermin, wild beasts and reptiles of the earth, and not of all creatures put together. Do not belittle the Shaikhs who put knowledge into practice. You are ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His Messengers [*rusul*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] among His servants, who comply with His wishes and gladly accept His workings [*af'āl*]. All salvation [*salāma*] lies in ready acceptance of the [divine] judgment [*qadā'*], curtailment of expectation [*qaṣr al-amāl*], and abstinence [*zuḥd*] from this world. When you notice some weakness in yourselves, therefore, be sure to remember death and curtail your expectation. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said, quoting [*ḥikāyatan*] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Those who draw near do not draw near to Me with anything more excellent than the fulfillment of that which I have established as a duty for them. And My servant continues to draw near to Me through supererogatory acts of worship [*nawāfil*] until I love him; and when I love him, I become for him a hearing and an eyesight, a hand and a support, so through Me he hears, through Me he sees and through Me he grasps.

He perceives all his actions through Allāh (Exalted is He) and through Him he abandons his own power and strength and his regard for himself and others. His movements, his power and his strength come to be through Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not through him and not through other creatures. He becomes detached from his own self [*nafs*] and his worldly and otherworldly interests. The whole of him is obedience, so his obedience will surely bring him near [to Allāh]. It will be a reason for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to love him. Through obedience one is loved and brought near, while through disobedience one is hated and kept at a distance. Through obedience intimate friendship is gained, while through disobedience lonely isolation is obtained, because he who acts badly must suffer alienation. Through following the sacred law [*shar'*] one obtains a good result, while the consequence of violating it is bad. If a person does not have the sacred law as his companion under all circumstances, he will perish with those who perish.

You must work and make efforts, but do not rely upon work, for he who neglects work is too ambitious [*tāmi'*], while he who relies on work is conceited and deluded. One set of people are poised between this world and the hereafter. One set of people are poised between the Garden [of Paradise] and the Fire [of Hell]. And one set of people are poised between creatures and the Creator. If you are abstinent [*zāhid*], you are poised between this world and the hereafter. If you are fearful, you are poised between the Garden and the Fire. And if you are one who really knows [*ʿarif*], you are poised between creatures and the Creator, looking toward creatures at one moment and toward the Creator at another. You notify the people and acquaint them with the conditions of the hereafter, its reckoning and everything it contains. No, you just report what you have witnessed and seen; getting a report is not like seeing with one's own eyes. The people [of the Lord] are waiting for the meeting with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), longing for it at their every moment. They do not fear death, because it is a means to meeting their Beloved. Leave before you are left. Relinquish before you are relinquished. Part company before your family and all other creatures part company with you. They will not do you any good once you have arrived in the tomb. You must give up taking permissible food with passionate appetite [*shahwa*].

O my people! You must practice restraint under all your circumstances. Pious restraint [*wara'*] is the garment of religion. Seek from me a garment for your religion. Follow me, for I am on the highway of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). I am a follower of his in his eating, his drinking, his sexual conduct [*nikāh*], his states [*aḥwāl*] and everything he used to indicate. I shall continue like this until it falls from me by the wish [*murād*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for I am on that course without seeking praise from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). I do not consider your praise or your blame, your giving or withholding, your goodness or your evil, your acceptance or your rejection. You are ignorant and one pays no attention to the ignorant. If you succeeded in worshipping Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), your worship would be thrown back at you, because it is worship combined with ignorance, and all ignorance is a cause of corruption. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

When someone worships Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in a state of ignorance, what he corrupts is more than what he improves.

There is no salvation [*falāh*] for you until you follow the Book and the Sunna.

One of the wise (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “When a person has no Shaikh, Iblīs is his Shaikh.” You must follow the Shaikhs who are learned in the Book and the Sunna and who put them into practice. Think well of them, learn from them, be on your best behavior in their presence and their company, then you may succeed. If you do not follow the Book and the Sunna, nor the Shaikhs who know them well, you will never succeed. Surely you have heard the saying: “He who is satisfied with his own subjective thinking [*ra’y*] will go astray.” You must train your lower self [*nafs*] by keeping company with those who are more learned than you. Concentrate on correcting it, then move on to others. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Start with yourself, then with those you have to support.

He also said:

There is no giving charity [*sadaqa*] while a close relative [*dhū raḥim*] is in need.

Fortieth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 14th of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

When Allāh wishes His servant well, He instructs him in religion and makes him see his own faults.

Knowledge [*fiqh*] of religion [*dīn*] is a means to knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of the self [*nafs*]. He who knows [*ʿarafa*] his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) will come to know all things through Him, as he experiences servitude [*ʿubūdiyya*] to Him and emancipation from all other servitude. There is no success [*ḥalāl*] or salvation [*najāt*] for you until you give Him priority over all others. You must give priority to your religion over your carnal desires [*shahawāt*], to your interest in the hereafter over your interest in this world, and to your Creator over His creatures. Your destruction lies in putting your lust [*shahwa*] before your religion, your worldly interest before your interest in the hereafter, and creatures before your Creator. Put this advice into practice and it will prove to be all you need. You are screened off from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He); you receive no answer. The answer comes only in response to the petition. If you respond to Him with work, He will respond to you when you make your request to Him. The crops come into being only after the farm work. You must do the farm work so that you may reap the harvest. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

This world is the farm [*mazraʿa*] of the hereafter.

This cultivation must be done in the heart. The seed is faith [*īmān*], and the ground is plowed and irrigated by righteous deeds. If this heart

contains tenderness [*līn*], compassion [*raʿfa*] and mercy [*rahma*], growth will take place within it, but if it is hard, coarse and rough, its soil will be salty, and saline soil does not produce crops. If you sow on a mountain top, the seed will not grow there, for it is nearer to destruction. You must learn this art of cultivation from one who is an expert in it. Do not try to apply your own subjective notions. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

In every craft, seek the help of its qualified experts.

You are busy with the cultivation of this world, not with the cultivation of the hereafter. Do you not realize that the seeker of this world will not succeed with the hereafter? He will not see the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you wish for the hereafter you must renounce this world, and if you wish for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) you must renounce comforts and creatures, then you may attain to Him. When you have truly accomplished this, the world, the hereafter, comforts and creatures will come to you as a necessary consequence, whether they like it or not, because the root is with you and all the branches are subordinate to this root.

Be sensible! You have no faith. You have no intelligence. You have no discernment. You are stuck with creatures, idolizing them [*mushrik bihim*]. You are doomed to perish if you do not repent. Step aside from the path of the people [of the Lord]. Step aside from their door. Do not rub shoulders with them physically, leaving out your heart. Do not jostle them with your hypocrisy, your pretensions and your craziness. The only way to stand close to the people [of the Lord] is with hearts and innermost beings [*asrār*], with the shoulders of absolute trust [*tawakkul*], patience in the face of adversities and willing acceptance of the allotments of destiny.

O young man! Be in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) as adversities descend upon you. While you are standing on the foothold of His love, you will not experience alteration. Neither winds nor rains will sweep you away, and spears will not pierce you. You will be steadfast outwardly and inwardly [*zāhīran wa-bāṭinan*], standing in a place in which there are no creatures, in which there is neither this world nor the hereafter, in which there are no legal claims [*ḥuqūq*], in which there are no chances [*ḥuẓūẓ*], in which there is no

pain, in which there is no question ‘how?’, in which there is nothing apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will not be troubled by the supervision of creatures or the burden of dependents. You will not be affected by little or much, not by blame or praise, not by coming or going. You will be with Him, beyond the comprehension of human beings, of jinn, of angels and of all creatures whatsoever.

How fine is the saying of one of the wise: “If you are going to be honest, [well and good], but if not, do not follow us!” Patience [*ṣabr*] and sincerity [*ikhhlās*] and honesty [*ṣidq*] are a foundation for what I have described to you. You may wish I would play the hypocrite with you and soften the way I talk to you, so your lower self [*nafs*] could enjoy itself, feel pleased and imagine it was onto something. No, and I pay it no respect! I am a fire, and nothing can withstand the fire except the salamander [*samandal*], which feels quite at home as it stays and sits there in the fire. You must strive to be a salamander in the fire of adversities, struggles, sufferings and having to endure the hammerings of destiny’s decisions [*aqḍiya*] and decrees [*aqḍār*], until you can bear to keep me company, to listen to my speech with all its harshness and then put it into practice—outwardly and inwardly, secretly and openly, at first in your private life, secondly in your public life, and thirdly in your whole existence. When you have truly accomplished this, success will come to you in this world and the hereafter, through the will [*mashīʾa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His ordainment [*taqḍīr*]. As for me, I am not partial to any creature in any way. It is for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and on His account. I pay no special attention of any kind to any of you without His command. I acquire strength through Him in exacting His due from His creatures, rather than getting weaker and stronger along with my lower self [*nafs*] and conforming to its view of them.

One of the wise (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “Agree with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) concerning creatures, and do not agree with creatures concerning Allāh. He who gets broken, gets broken, and he who gets mended, gets mended.”

Why should I care? You are disobedient to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), scornful of His commandments and prohibitions, in

conflict with Him over His judgments and decrees, and hostile to Him by night and by day, so you are an abomination to Him and subject to His curse.

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in one of His utterances:

When I am obeyed, I am well pleased, and when I am well pleased, I bless; and My blessing has no end. But when I am disobeyed, I become angry, and when I become angry, I curse; and My curse reaches down to the seventh son.

This is the age when religion [*dīn*] is traded for figs [*ṭīn*]; the age of tall expectations and powerful greed. You must take pains to ensure that you are not among those about whom Allāh has said:

And We shall advance upon the work they have done, and make it into scattered particles of dust. (25:23)

Whenever a work is intended to please anyone other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), it is merely scattered dust.

Woe unto you! If your business is hidden from the common folk, it is no secret to the élite [*khawāṣṣ*]. Your counterfeiting may be concealed from the ordinary person, but not from the money changer. It may be hidden from the ignorant, but not from the learned. You must work and do your work sincerely. Concentrate on Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and give up paying attention to that which does not concern you. Other people are part of that which does not concern you, so do not focus your attention on them. Mind the business of your own lower self [*nafs*], until you can control it, subdue it, hold it captive and make it serve as your riding animal. Then you will be able to ride it across the deserts of this world in order to reach the hereafter. It will carry you past creatures until you reach the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then, when you have accomplished this and have gained strength, you will be able to give rides to others. Out of this world you will take them, to their Master [*Mawlā*] you will convey them, and with morsels of wisdom you will feed them.

You must accept the *Ḥadīth* without giving it a forced interpretation, for he who interprets to suit his own purpose [*al-muta'awwil*] is a deceiver. Do not be afraid of creatures and do not pin your hopes on them, for this constitutes weakness of faith. Let your aspiration be lofty and you will rise high. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will surely

give to you in proportion to your aspiration [*himma*], your honesty [*ṣidq*] and your sincerity [*ikhlās*]. You must work hard, be enterprising and go seeking, for although you cannot get there on your own, it is essential that you play your part. You must exert yourself in acquiring righteous deeds, just as you must exert yourself in acquiring sustenance. The devil [*shaiṭān*] plays with ordinary people, just as the horseman plays with his polo ball. He can take one of them and steer him any way he wishes, as one of you may steer his mount in any direction he desires. He strikes the backs of their hearts and uses them however he may wish. He pulls them down from the minarets [*ṣawāmi'*], drags them away from the prayer niches [*maḥārib*] and traps them in his service, while the lower self [*nafs*] assists him in this and paves the way for him.

O young man! You must beat your lower self with the whip of hunger and the denial of carnal desires, luxuries and vanities. You must also beat your heart with the whip of fear and vigilant awareness [*murāqaba*]. You must make begging forgiveness [*istighfār*] the regular practice of your lower self, your heart and your innermost being [*sirr*], for each of these has its own peculiar sin. Make them accustomed to compliance and to obeying Him under all circumstances.

O you of little cognizance [*dirāya*], when it is a matter of destiny [*qadar*] you cannot reject it, change it, erase it or resist it. So do not wish for anything He does not wish. Since He will bring you only what He wishes, you should not wish. If He does not want something to happen, it will not happen, so do not trouble your lower self and your heart about it. Submit everything to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Cling to the hem of His mercy with the hand of your repentance to Him, for if you continue to do so this world will vanish from the eye of your heart and of your head. You will attach but little importance to its misfortunes and the renunciation of its lusts and pleasures. You will not complain about its bites and stings. Where your lower self and the agony of suffering are concerned, you will come to be like Pharaoh's wife Āsiya (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with her). When Pharaoh realized that she was a believer [*mu'mina*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), he gave orders for iron spikes to be driven through her hands and feet, and had her lashed with whips. She raised her head toward heaven and saw the gates of Paradise opened wide, while the

angels were building a house there. Then the angel of death came to her to take her spirit [*rūḥ*], and he said to her: "This house belongs to you!" So she laughed as the agony of the torture left her, and she said:

My Lord, build for me, in Your presence, a house in Paradise. (66:11)

This is what you will come to be like, because you will look with the eye of your heart and your certitude [*yaqīn*] at what is over there, and will therefore endure with patience the trials and tribulations existing here. You will forsake your own power and strength, and you will neither take nor give, neither move nor keep still, except through the power and strength of Allāh. You will be annihilated in His presence. You will surrender your affair to Him. You will comply with His wishes concerning you and concerning His creatures. You will therefore make no plan beside His plan, no decision beside His decision, and no choice beside His choice. When someone has really experienced [*‘arafa*] this state, he will seek no other. He will have no desire for anything else. How can any intelligent person fail to desire this state [*ḥāl*], when it is only through this that one may fully enjoy the companionship of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)?

Forty-first Discourse

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

Know that all things are set in motion by His dynamic action, and rendered motionless by His immobilizing action. When this is predicated of him, He is relieved of the burden of partnership [*shirk*] with creatures, and creatures are also relieved of it, because He cannot find fault with them or hold them accountable for anything consequent on such a relationship. He demands of them only what the sacred law [*sharʿ*] demands of them, and that is all. He holds them accountable with respect to sacred law, and absolves them with respect to knowledge, by integrating the rule [*ḥukm*] and the knowledge [*ʿilm*]. Recognition of the working of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in creation is a tenet of belief [*ʿaqīda*], by which the rule of law is not infringed. He is the One who ordains [*al-Muqaddir*] and He is the One who calls to account [*al-Muʿālib*].

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

This is this the firm belief [*muʿtaqad*] of every Muslim who is fully convinced [*mūqin*], who affirms the Unity [*muwahḥid*], who is well pleased with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and in accord with Him in regard to His judgments, His decrees and His working in him and in others. He has no need of your person and your patience, but He watches how you operate. Are you honest about your claim, or are you lying?

The lover [*muḥibb*] keeps nothing in his own possession; he hands everything over to his beloved. Loving and possessing are incompatible. The lover of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), who is sincere [*ṣādiq*] about his love, will surrender to Him his own self, his wealth and his future [*ʿāqiba*], and will give up his freedom of choice

where He and others are concerned. He will harbor no suspicion about His way of handling things. He will not try to hurry Him or accuse Him of being tight-fisted. Whatever emanates toward him from Him, he will find it agreeable. All other directions will be closed to him, leaving him one direction only.

O you who claim to love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), your love for Him cannot be considered perfect until all other directions are closed where He is concerned, and you have only one direction left. Your Beloved will expel from your heart all creatures between the heavenly Throne and the surface of the earth, so you will love neither this world nor the hereafter. You will be estranged from you, and feel at home with Him. You will come to resemble Laylā's Majnūn, who was so obsessed with love for her that he shunned his fellow creatures and preferred to live in isolation, having only the wild animals for company. He left civilization behind and preferred to be in desolate places. He moved away from the praise and blame of people. Their speech and their silence became one and the same to him; it was all the same to him whether they viewed him with favor or with displeasure. One day he was asked: "Who are you?" "Laylā," said he. He was blind to everything apart from her, and deaf to hearing any speech but hers. He would not give her up because of any kind of criticism. How fine are the words of a certain poet:

When souls share mutual support in passion,
people [who try to advise them] are beating on cold iron.

This heart, which knows the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and loves Him and draws near to Him, becomes estranged from creatures and from being at ease with them. It recoils from its food, its drink, its clothing and its marital relations. It feels distaste for civilization and wanders off toward deserted places. Nothing can curb it apart from a [divine] command. The sacred law keeps it within the bounds of commandment and prohibition, and the working [of Allāh] restrains it until the moment of the advent of destiny [*qadar*]. O Allāh, do not release us from the hand of Your mercy, for we shall drown in the ocean of this world and the ocean of existence [*wujūd*]. O Bestower of generous favor and fruitful ideas, come upon us!

O young man! Anyone who does not put what I say into practice cannot understand what I say. When he puts it into practice, he will understand. If you do not have a good opinion of me, do not believe in what I am saying and do not put it into practice, how can you understand? You are hungry as you stand there face to face with me, but you do not eat my food, so how can you satisfy your hunger? Abū Huraira (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) is reported as having said: “I heard Allāh’s Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) say:

If a person is sick for a single night, and he is well pleased with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and patient in bearing what has afflicted him, he will emerge from his sins as he was on the day when his mother gave him birth.

Nothing can come of you, yet you are indispensable. Mu‘ādh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) used to say to the Companions [*aṣ-Ṣaḥāba*]: “Come on, let us believe for a moment! Yes, come on, taste for a moment! Come on, enter the door for a moment!” He meant this in a spirit of friendliness toward them. He was hinting at an insight into enigmatic things, hinting at looking with the eye of certainty [*‘ain al-yaqīn*]. Not every Muslim is a believer [*mu‘min*], nor is every believer convinced [*mūqin*]. This is why, when the Companions (may Allāh be well pleased with them) said to the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace): “Mu‘ādh is telling us: ‘Come on, let us believe for a moment!’ Are we not believers?” he replied:

Leave Mu‘ādh to do his business [*da‘ū Mu‘ādhān wa-sha’ nahu*]!

O slave of your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*], your natural impulses [*ṭab’*], your devil [*shaitān*] and your worldly interests [*dunyā*], you have no value in the sight of Allāh and in the sight of His righteous servants. He who worships the hereafter does not merit attention, so why should he who worships this world?

Woe unto you! What can you accomplish through tongue-wagging without work? You are lying when, according to you, you are telling the truth. You are guilty of idolatry [*tushriku*] when, according to you, you are affirming the [divine] Unity [*tuwahḥidu*]. You are sick, yet firmly believe that you possess good health. You have a fake, yet believe it to be a jewel. My task with you is to make you stop lying and instruct you

to be honest. In my hand I hold three touchstones with which I can ascertain the facts: The Book, the Sunna and my heart. It is on this last touchstone that blurred shapes [*ashbāh*] become clear. The heart does not arrive at this stage until it has really learned to put the Book and the Sunna into practice. The practical application [*amal*] of knowledge [*ilm*] is the crown of knowledge. The practical application of knowledge is the light of knowledge, the purity of purity [*ṣafā' aṣ-ṣafā'*], the essence of the essence [*jawhar al-jawhar*], the kernel of the kernel [*lubb al-lubb*]. The practical application of knowledge makes the heart healthy and pure. When the heart is brought into good health, the physical limbs and organs become healthy. When the heart is purified, the physical limbs and organs become pure. When it is robed in honor, Paradise is robed in honor. When the diet is correct, the condition of the body is correct. The health of the heart has to do with the health of the innermost being [*sirr*], which is between the human being [*ādami*] and his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). The innermost being is a bird and the heart is its cage. The heart is a bird and the physical body is its cage. The body is a bird and the tomb is its cage, for it is the cage of creatures, which all of them are bound to enter.

Forty-second Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of the 19th of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

He who would like to be the noblest of all people, let him devote himself piously to Allāh. He who would like to be the strongest of all people, let him put all his trust in Allāh. And He who would like to be the richest of all people, let him be reliant on what is in the hand of Allāh, rather than relying on what is in his own hand.

If a person wishes to enjoy prestige in this world and the hereafter, he must devote himself piously to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), because He has said (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allāh is the most devout [*atqā*] of you. (49:13)

Nobility resides in pious devotion to Him, while degradation lies in disobedience to Him. If someone wishes for strength in the religion [*dīn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), he must put all his trust in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), because total trust [*tawakkul*] will make the heart sound, strengthen it, train it, guide it and let it have marvelous experiences. Do not rely on your coins of silver and gold and your material means [*asbāb*], for this will incapacitate and weaken you. Put all your trust in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for He will strengthen you, help you, treat you kindly, grant you opportunities from sources you could never imagine, and fortify your heart. Pay no attention to this world as it comes and goes, nor to the movement of creatures to and fro, then you will be the strongest of all people. If you put all your trust in your wealth, your social status, your family and your material means, however, you will be exposed to the detestation of

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the loss of all these things, because He is very jealous and does not like to see your heart containing anything other than Him.

If a person would like to have riches in this world and the hereafter, he must devote himself piously to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to the exclusion of all else. He must stand at His door and feel too ashamed before Him to approach the door of any other. He must lower his eyes from looking at anyone but Him; I mean the eyes of his heart [*qalb*], not the eyes of his outer form [*qālab*].

How can you rely on what you have in your hands, when it is liable to fade away, and abandon reliance on Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), when He will never fade away? Your ignorance of Him leads you to reliance on others instead of Him. Your confidence in Him is total enrichment. Your confidence in others is total impoverishment.

O you who abandon pious devotion, you have been deprived of honor in this world and the next. O you who put all your trust in creatures and material means, you have been deprived of strength and empowerment through Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in this world and the next. O you who rely on what you have in your hands, you have been deprived of enrichment through Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in this world and the hereafter.

O young man! If you wish to be devout, trusting and confident, you must learn patience, for it is a basis for all that is good. If your intention to be patient is genuine, and you practice patience for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His reward to you will be that His love and His nearness will enter your heart in this world and the hereafter. Patience is conformity to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in compliance with His judgment and His decree of destiny [*qadar*], of which He has foreknowledge and which none of his creatures is able to erase. This is established fact in the view of the convinced believer, so he bears with patience whatever He has decreed for him, of his own volition and not from sheer necessity. In the first stage, patience is a compulsory obligation, but in the second stage it is a voluntary choice.

How can you lay claim to faith [*īmān*], when you have no patience? How can you claim real knowledge [*maʿrifa*], when you have no willingness to accept? This not something that comes about through

the unsubstantiated claim. There is nothing worth talking about until you see the door, rest your head on the threshold, and patiently endure the trampling of destiny's footsteps. The footsteps of injury and benefit will trample the body of your heart [*qalb*], not the body of your outer form [*qālab*], while you stay in your place without budging, as if you were drugged [*mubannaj*], as if you were a body without a spirit [*rūh*]. This business requires stillness with no movement and unobtrusiveness with no comment. It is a matter of being absent from creatures, of not being present with them as far as the heart, the secret core [*sirr*], the inner [*bāṭin*] and the meaning-content [*ma'nā*] are concerned.

How much do I prescribe, but you fail to apply! How much do I elaborate, expound and explain, but you fail to understand! How much do I give, but you do not take! How much do I admonish you, but you will not heed the warning! How hard are your hearts and how great is their ignorance of Him (Almighty and Glorious is He)! If you really knew Him, believed in the meeting with Him, and were mindful of death and what lies beyond it, you would not be like this. Surely you have witnessed the deaths of your fathers and your relatives? Surely you have witnessed the deaths of your kings? So will you not take warning from them, and restrain yourselves from the pursuit of this world and the desire to stay in it forever? Will you not change your hearts, transform them and expel creatures from them? As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh does not change what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves. (13:11)

You talk but do not act, and so often when you do act you are not sincere. Be sensible and do not misbehave in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must acquire strength and conviction. Turn in repentance and reflect! This condition you are in now will do you no good in the hereafter. You are niggardly with your own selves; if only you would treat them generously, you would obtain for them that which is beneficial to them in the hereafter. You have been preoccupied with that which must pass away, while missing that which does not pass away. Do not preoccupy yourselves with the accumulation of property, wives and children, for you will very soon be separated from all that. Do not preoccupy yourselves with the pursuit

of this world and importance due to creatures, for they can in no way enable you to dispense with Allāh. Your heart is defiled by idolatry [*shirk*], doubtful about Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), suspicious of Him and antagonistic toward Him under all circumstances, and since He recognizes this about you, He will hate you and sow hatred of you in the hearts of His righteous servants.

A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) would only go out of his house with his eyes blindfold, guided by his son. When asked about this, he said: “[I do it] so that I shall not set eyes on an unbeliever [*kāfir*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).” When he did go out one day with his eyes unbandaged, he saw one and collapsed in a faint. How intense was his zeal for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)! How is it that you serve others besides Him, and worship them idolatrously? How is it that you consume His blessings, but are ungrateful to Him? Far from noticing this paradox, you go dining with the unbelievers and sit in their company, because there is no faith in your hearts and no zeal for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must practice repentance [*tawba*], praying for forgiveness [*istighfār*], and feeling a sense of shame [*ḥayāʾ*] before Him. Cast off the clothing of insolence toward Him and of impudence in His presence. Avoid the things of this world that are unlawful [*ḥarām*] and dubious [*shubuhāt*], then avoid making passionate and lustful use of those that are permissible [*mubāḥāt*], because taking them with passion [*hawā*] and lust [*shahwa*] will distract you from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

This world is the believer’s prison.

How can the prisoner be happy in his prison? He cannot be happy. His face may look cheerful, but there is sadness in his heart. He wears cheerfulness on his exterior [*ẓāhir*], while agonies are tearing him apart in his interior [*bāṭin*], in his private experience [*khalwa*] and in his inner content [*maʿnā*]. His wounds are bandaged beneath his clothing. His wounds are covered by the shirt of his smile. This is why his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) takes pride in him, as do His angels, pointing him out with their fingers. Every single one of these is a brave hero in the empire [*dawla*] of the religion [*dīn*] of Allāh (Almighty and

Glorious is He) and His secret realm [*sirr*]. They never cease being patient with Him and swallowing the bitterness of His decrees, until He loves them. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh loves those who are patient. (3:146)

It is only because of His love for you that He puts you to the test. Whenever you carry out His commandments and observe His prohibitions, you are loved all the more, and whenever you bear His tribulation with patience, you are drawn all the closer to Him. A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “Allāh has declined to punish His loved one [*ḥabīb*], but He puts him to the test and tries his patience.” And the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) used to say:

It is as if this world never was, and as if the hereafter had never ceased to be.

O seekers of this world, O lovers of this world, come closer to me so that I can make you aware of your faults, guide you to the path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and put you in touch with those who seek the countenance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You are in a crazy situation. You must listen to what I have to say to you, put it into practice, and be sincere in your practice. If you learn what I have to tell, and then die in the practice of it, you will be raised up to the highest heaven [*al-‘illiyyūn*]. You will look up there and see that my words originate from there, so you will pray for me, salute me with peace, and experience the reality [*ḥaqīqa*] of what I am alluding to.

O my people! Dispel suspicion of me from your hearts, for I am not playing games or pursuing worldly interests. I am merely stating the truth and pointing out the truth. Never in my entire life have I stopped thinking well of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] and serving them, and this is what stands me in good stead. I want no fee from you for giving you my advice and speaking to you. The price of my words is paid by putting them into practice, for they are words that lend themselves to private application [*khalwa*], to sincerity [*ikhlāṣ*]. Hypocrisy [*nifāq*] ceases with the cessation of cunning schemes [*hiyal*] and expedients [*asbāb*]. My words are intended to develop faith [*īmān*] and conviction [*iqān*], not the lower selves [*nufūs*] and the passions [*ahwiya*]. They are meant for the believer [*mu’min*], not for the hypocrite [*munāfiq*].

O my people! You must give up crazy notions and futile desires, and devote your attention to the remembrance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Talk about what can bring you benefit, and be silent about that which can do you harm. If you wish to speak, you should reflect on what you want to speak about, bring a good intention [*niyya ṣāliha*] to bear upon it, and then do your talking. This is why it has been said that the tongue of the ignorant person is in front of his heart, while the tongue of the intelligent person is behind his heart. You should stay mute, for if Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) wants speech from you He will cause you to speak. When He wants you for some purpose, He will prepare you for it. To keep His company is to be totally mute. Then, when the muteness is complete, speech will come from Him if He so wills, or He may keep it this way until the time of arrival in the hereafter. This is the significance of the saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

When someone really knows Allāh, his tongue becomes weary.

The tongue of his outer [*ẓāhir*] and of his inner [*bāṭin*] becomes too weary to protest to Him about anything at all. There is now only agreement with no argument. He makes the eyes of his heart blind to the sight of any but Him. His innermost being [*sirr*] is torn to shreds, his business is ruined, his wealth is scattered, he leaves his existence [*wujūd*], his worldly and otherworldly interests depart, and away go his name and address.

Then, when He wills, He resurrects him. (80:22)

He brings him into existence after nonexistence. He creates him anew. He annihilates him with the hand of annihilation [*fanā'*], then restores him with the hand of survival [*baqā'*], so that he may seek reunion [*liqā'*]. Then he sends him back to summon people from poverty to wealth; wealth meaning enrichment through Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and being in contact [*ittiṣāl*] with Him, and poverty meaning remoteness from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and making do with others. The rich man is one whose heart wins the nearness of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), while the poor man is one who fails to achieve this.

If a person wishes for this wealth, he must renounce this world and the hereafter and all that they contain, as well as everything whatsoever

that is apart from Him. He must evict all things from his heart, one thing after another. You must not be restricted to this trifling amount you have at your disposal. This trifling amount you have here has been made available as travel rations, so stock yourselves with it in the course of your journey toward Him. He has provided you with blessings, so that you may ascribe them to Him and use them as pointers to Him. He has provided you with knowledge, so that you may put it into practice and be guided by His light.

O Allāh, guide our hearts toward You, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Forty-third Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 21st of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O young man! If you wish for success [*falāḥ*], you must contradict your lower self [*nafs*] for the sake of concurrence with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Concur with it in obedience to Him and contradict it in disobedience to Him. Your lower self is the obstacle keeping you from real knowledge [*maʿrifā*] of creatures, while creatures are the obstacle keeping you from real knowledge of the Creator (Almighty and Glorious is He). As long as you remain stuck with your lower self, you cannot really know creatures, and as long as you remain stuck with creatures, you cannot really know the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). As long as you remain stuck with this world, you cannot really know the hereafter, and as long as you remain stuck with the hereafter, you cannot see the Lord of the hereafter. Possessor [*mālik*] and possession [*mamlūk*] are not to be confused, as this world and the hereafter are not to be confused. By the same token, Creator [*Khāliq*] and creatures [*khalq*] are not to be confused. The lower self is “given to commanding evil” [*ammāra bi’s-sū’*; Q.12:53]; this is its natural disposition [*jibilla*]. How long, therefore, how long will it be until you take your orders from what the heart [*qalb*] commands? You must struggle against the self under all circumstances. Do not give it a pretext by citing His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

And He inspires it [the self] with awareness of what is wrong for it and what is right for it. (91:8)

Melt it down through struggle, for when it has melted and faded it will become meekly subservient to the heart; then the heart will become meekly subservient to the innermost being [*sirr*]; then the innermost

being will become meekly subservient to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so all will drink from the same source. When the process by which you melt it down has been completed, you will receive a summons relevant to your heart:

And do not kill your own selves [*anfus*]. Surely Allāh is ever Compassionate to you. (4:29)

This message [*khiṭāb*] from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) comes only after its [the self's] purification from murky confusions and the melting away of its evil, and the fattening of the heart through remembrance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and obedience to Him. If it has not happened to it, do not expect it to be brought near [to Him] together with its murkiness and evil. How could it be accorded nearness to the King, in default of purification from defilements? Curtail its expectations and it may become obedient to what you require of it. Admonish it with the words of exhortation used by the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

When you enter upon the morning, do not talk to your self about the evening, and when you enter the evening, do not talk to your self about the next morning, for you cannot know what your name will be tomorrow.

You are more sympathetic to it [your own self] than other people are, yet you have neglected it, so why should anyone else be sympathetic to it and take care of it? The force of your expectation and your greediness have induced you to neglect it. You must strive to curtail expectation and diminish greed, to remember death and be vigilantly aware of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and to seek healing treatment through the breaths and words of the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*] and undisturbed remembrance [*dhikr*] by night and day. You must tell it: "To your credit is what you have earned, and to your debit is what you have deserved." (cf. Q.2:286). No one will cooperate with you or give you any part of his work, and work and striving are indispensable. Your friend is he who restrains you, while your enemy is he who tempts you.

I see you in the presence of creatures, not in the presence of the Creator (Almighty and Glorious is He), paying what is due to the self and to creatures, but failing to pay what is due to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and offering thanks to others for His blessings. Who but He has given you all the blessings you enjoy, that

you should offer them your gratitude and worship? If you do acknowledge that the blessings you have are from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), where are His thanks? If you do acknowledge that He has created you, where is His worship, expressed in the carrying out of His commandments, the observance of His prohibitions and the patient endurance of His trials? You must struggle with your lower self until it is guided aright. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

As for those who strive in Our cause, surely We shall guide them to Our paths. (29:69)

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has also said:

If you help Allāh, He will help you and He will make your foothold firm. (47:7)

Do not indulge the self and do not obey it, then you may prosper. Do not smile in its face, and for every thousand words give it one word in reply, until it is disciplined and becomes tame and undemanding. When it wants you to satisfy carnal desires and provide sensual pleasures, you must make it accept delay and postponement, telling it: "Your appointed time and place is Paradise!" You must train it to endure with patience the bitterness of being denied, until the giving comes. If you teach it to be patient, and it does become patient, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will be with it, because He has said:

Surely Allāh is with those who are patient. (2:153)

Do not allow it to have any say, for it will command only evil. If you do respond to it, you must contradict it, for it derives benefit from being contradicted. O you who claim to wish for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) while staying put with your own self, you are lying when you make your claim. The self [*nafs*] and the truth [*ḥaqq*] are incompatible. This world and the hereafter are incompatible. When a person sticks with his own self, he misses the opportunity of sticking with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When a person sticks with this world, he misses the opportunity of sticking with the hereafter. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

He who loves his interest in this world damages his interest in the hereafter, and he who loves his interest in the hereafter damages his interest in this world.

Be patient, for when your patience is complete your satisfaction will become complete. Your annihilation [*fanā'*] will come to you, so that everything will become pleasant for you. Everything will be transformed into thankfulness. Remoteness will turn into nearness. Idolatry [*shirk*] will turn into affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*]. Thus you will see neither harm nor benefit as being caused by creatures. You will see no opposites [*addād*]; instead, all entrances and avenues will be unified, so you will see only one direction. This is a state that not many creatures can comprehend. Indeed it is peculiar to a very few individuals, just one out of all the millions anyone could count before running out of breath.

O young man! You must endeavor to die right here, in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must endeavor to have your lower self die before the departure of your spirit [*rūh*] from your body. Its death will come about through patience and opposition, then you will soon celebrate the outcome of this. Your patient suffering will cease, but its reward will never pass away. I have practiced patience, and I have seen that the outcome of patience is commendable. I died, then He revived me, then He caused me to die. I vanished from existence, then He brought me back into existence out of my invisibility [*ghaiba*]. I perished [*halaktu*] in His company, and I was empowered [*malaktu*] in His company. I struggled against my lower self by giving up the exercise of choice [*ikhtiyār*] and will [*irāda*], until this came about for me, so that destiny [*qadar*] began to guide me, grace [*minna*] to help me, action [*fi'l*] to move me, jealous care [*ghaira*] to safeguard me, the will [*irāda*] to obey me, preordination [*sābiqa*] to promote me, and Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to raise me up.

Woe unto you! You run away from me, when I am your custodian who will keep you safe. Your place must be here with me, otherwise you are doomed to perish. O poor little ignoramus, make your pilgrimage [*hajj*] to me first of all, then secondly make your pilgrimage to the House [*al-bait*]. I am the door of the Ka'ba. Come here and let me teach you how to perform the pilgrimage. I shall teach you how to address the Lord of the Ka'ba. You will be able to see when the dust has cleared. Be seated, sirs, and take refuge with me, for I have been given strength from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The people [of the Lord] will command you to do what He has commanded you to do, and they

will forbid you to do what He has forbidden you to do. Your counseling has been entrusted to them, so they will discharge the trust in this respect.

You must work in the domain of Wisdom [*dār al-ḥikma*] until you reach the domain of Power [*dār al-quḍra*]. This world is [the domain of] Wisdom, while the hereafter is [the domain of] Power. Wisdom needs tools and instruments and means, while Power has no such need. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has only made it so in order to distinguish the domain of Power from the domain of Wisdom. In the hereafter there is immediate causation [*takwīn bi-lā sabab*], through which your limbs and organs will be made to speak and testify against you concerning the sins you have committed in disobedience to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). On the Day of Resurrection [*yawm al-qiyāma*] the veils will be lifted and secrets will be revealed, whether you wish it so or not. No creature will enter the Fire [of Hell] except with a heart stunned by the impact of the evidence against it.

You must read out your records with the tongues of your reflection upon them, then repent the evil deeds and give thanks for the good deeds. Compile the records of sins and strike out their lines with repentance.

O young man! You have repented at my hand and become my companion. If you do not take instruction from what I have to say to you, what benefit will you derive from this? You are interested in the outer form, but not in the inner content. If someone wishes to be my companion, he must accept what I have to say to him and put it into practice. He must turn as I turn. Otherwise he should not try to accompany me, for he will lose more than he gains. I am a large food-table and no one eats a thing off me; an open door that no one enters. What am I to do with you? How much can I tell you, when you do not listen? I want you for your sakes, not for my own. I neither fear you nor hope for anything from you. I make no distinction between ruination and prosperity, between the survivor and the dead, between the rich and the poor, between the king and the slave [*mamlūk*]. The matter is not in your hands. When I expelled the love of this world from my heart, this became genuine for me. How can your affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] be genuine, when your heart contains the love of this world?

Surely you have heard the saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

The love of this world is the chief part of every error.

As long as you are a novice [*mubtadi'*], a follower [*muqtadi*], a seeker [*tālib*], a traveler [*sālik*], the love of this world will be the chief part of every error as far as you are concerned. When your heart comes to the end of its journey and attains to the nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will cause you to love your own allotted share of this world and to feel dislike for the portion of another. He will make your own allotments attractive to you, so that you will use them to the full, in consummation of His foreknowledge concerning you. Thus you will be satisfied with them and pay no attention to others. Your heart [*qalb*] will reside in His presence, even as it moves about [*yataqallabu*] in this world, just as the people of Paradise move about in the Garden. Everything that comes your way from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will be dear to you, because you wish through His wishing [*irāda*], choose through His choosing [*ikhtiyār*], move with His destiny [*qadar*], separate your heart from everything apart from Him, and detach this world and the hereafter from you. Your acquisition of your allotted shares, and your fondness for them, will thus come about through Him, not through you.

The pretentious hypocrite, who thinks so highly of his own deeds, may prolong his daytime fasting and his night-time vigil, and he may eat and dress rough, but he is in darkness inwardly [*bāṭinan*] and outwardly [*ẓāhiran*]. Where his heart is concerned, he does not move forward by a single step toward his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he is one of those who are “toiling, weary” (88:3). His hidden agenda [*sarīra*] is clearly apparent to the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*], the saints [*awliyā'*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] who have attained to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Today he is well known to the élite [*khawāṣṣ*] among creatures, and tomorrow all the common folk will also know him well. When the élite see him they detest him with their hearts, but they screen him with the veil of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Do not try to match the people [of the Lord] with your hypocrisy [*nifāq*], for you are not fit. There is nothing to be said until you cut the waistband [*ẓunnār*; worn by non-Muslims], renew your Islām, truly

repent with your heart, and leave the house of your natural urges [*tab'*], your passions [*hawā*], your existence [*wujūd*], and your efforts to attract benefit to you and repel harm from you. There is nothing to be said until you depart from you, leaving your lower self [*nafs*], your passions and your natural urges at the door, leaving your heart in the lobby, and leaving your innermost being [*sirr*] in the closet with the King.

Make haste to tackle the foundation; then, when you have it firmly laid, make haste to tackle the building. The cement for the foundation is profound knowledge [*fiqh*] of religion—the knowledge of the heart, not the knowledge of the tongue. The knowledge of the heart will bring you close to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), while the knowledge of the tongue will bring you close to creatures and their kings. The knowledge of the heart will leave you in the forefront of the assembly [*majlis*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). It will move you to the fore, promote you, and bring your steps near to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Woe unto you! You are wasting your time in the pursuit of knowledge [*ilm*] and failing to put it into practice, so you are in a state of ignorance within folly. You are serving the enemies of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and worshipping them idolatrously. He is beyond needing you and those you idolize. He will accept no partner [*sharik*] of you. Do you not realize that you are the slave [*abd*] of anyone who holds your reins? If you wish for success [*falāh*], you must leave the reins of your heart in the hand of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), really put all your trust [*tawakkul*] in Him, serve Him outwardly and inwardly, and harbor no suspicion of Him, for He is beyond suspicion. He is More Aware [*a'raf*] of what is in your best interest than you are, for He knows and you know not. You must observe silence in His presence, and practice unobtrusiveness, keeping your eyes down, your head bowed and your tongue still, until you receive permission from Him to speak. Then you will speak because of Him, not because of you, so your speech will be a remedy for the diseases of hearts, a healing for innermost beings [*asrār*], and a light for intellects [*uqūl*].

O Allāh, illumine our hearts and guide them to You. Purify our innermost beings and bring them near to You, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Forty-fourth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early evening of Tuesday, the 23rd of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The believer [*mu'min*] is a stranger in this world, the ascetic [*zāhid*] is a stranger in the hereafter, and the knower [*ʿārif*] is a stranger in all that is apart from the Master [*al-Mawlā*]. The believer is imprisoned in this world, even if he lives in the lap of luxury as far as his livelihood and lodging are concerned. His family enjoy the benefits of his wealth and social status [*jāh*], making merry and laughing all around him, while he is in an internal prison [*siġn bāṭin*]. He wears his cheerfulness on his face and bears his sadness in his heart. He is well acquainted with this world, so he divorces it with his heart. At first he divorces it with a single repudiation, because he fears the reversal of fortune [*taqlīb al-a'yān*]. Then, while he is in this condition [i.e., while the divorce is still revocable], the hereafter opens her door and he catches a lightning flash of the beauty of her face. He thereupon divorces this world with a second repudiation. Then the hereafter comes to him [as his bride] and he embraces her. He now divorces this world with a third repudiation [irrevocable according to Islamic law], and settles down with the hereafter completely. But while he is with her, he glimpses a lightning flash of the radiance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he divorces the hereafter. This world asks him: "Why did you divorce me?" He replies: "I saw someone more beautiful than you." The hereafter also asks him: "Why did you divorce me?" To her he replies: "Because you are fashioned [*muḥdatha*] and formed [*muṣawwara*], surely you are different from Him, so how could I not divorce you?"

At this point his intimate knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is fully realized, so he becomes free from all that is apart from Him, a stranger in this world and the hereafter, in

exile from everything, extinct to everything. This world now stands waiting at his service. She is seen as a maidservant, not as a concubine [*surriyya*], ready to do a job of work, but devoid of the glamor she seems to have in the sight of her own sons. She is put in this position just so that his attention to her will not be like the attention paid by that queen, who, when she fell in love with a certain person, used to send her presents to him by the hands of old hags and swarthy [*zanj*] slave-girls, because of her possessiveness and jealousy of him.

Approach your Lord with your whole being. Set tomorrow aside with yesterday. By the time tomorrow comes, you may be dead. As for you, O rich man, do not preoccupy yourself with your riches to the neglect of Him. Tomorrow may come and find you a pauper. Do not be attached to anything, but be with the Creator of all things, who is 'something' that nothing resembles. Do not pause for rest with any other than Him. As Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

There is no rest for the believer short of meeting his Lord.

When what is between you and creatures is in ruins, and what is between you and Him is in good shape, then He may exercise choice on your behalf, so you must not be averse to what He chooses. Anyone who is patient with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will experience marvels of His gracious favor. If a person suffers poverty with patience, wealth will come his way. Prophethood [*nubuwwa*] has most often been conferred on shepherds, and governorship on freedmen [*mawālī*] and foreigners. Whenever the servant abases himself before Him, He honors him. Whenever the servant behaves humbly toward Him, He exalts him in rank. He is the Honorer [*al-Mu'izz*] and the Abaser [*al-Mudhill*], the Exalter [*ar-Rāfi'*] and the Humiliator [*al-Wādi'*], the Enabler [*al-Muwaffiq*] and the Facilitator [*al-Musahhil*]. But for Him, we would not know Him.

O you who think so highly of your own deeds, how ignorant you are! Were it not for His enabling help [*tawfiq*], you would not perform the prayer [*ṣalāt*], keep the fast or have any patience. You are at the station [*maqām*] of gratitude, not at the station of pride. Most servants [*ibād*] are proud of their worship [*ibāda*] and their deeds, looking for praise and applause from creatures, keen to win the favor of this world and its

prominent figures. The reason for this is their attachment to their lower selves [*nufūs*] and their passions [*ahwiya*]. This world is the darling of lower selves, the hereafter is the darling of hearts, and the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the darling of innermost beings [*asrār*].

The elements of wisdom [*ḥikam*] are cast into your hearts only after strict observance [*ihkām*] of the rule of law [*ḥukm*], because the rule of law is the basis of this business. If a person claims to have any part in it, in the absence of strict observance of the rule of law, he must be lying, because every ‘fact’ that is not attested to by the *Sharī‘a* [the sacred law of Islām] constitutes atheism [*ẓandaqa*]. Fly to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) on the wings of the Book and the Sunna. Enter His presence with your hand in the hand of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). Take him as your minister [*wazīr*] and your teacher. Let his hand beautify you, groom you and introduce you to Him. He is the governor [*ḥākim*] of the abode of spirits [*bait al-arwāḥ*], the educator of seekers, the expert [*jahbadh*] of the sought, the prince of the righteous [*amīr aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*], the distributor of states [*aḥwāl*] and stations [*maqāmāt*] amongst them, because the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has delegated this task to him. He has appointed him commander of all. When robes of honor are issued to the soldiers on the orders of the king, they can be distributed only by the hand of their commander.

The affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] is an act of worship [*‘ibāda*], while the idolizing [*shirk*] of creatures is a habit [*‘āda*], so you must practice the worship and give up the habit. When you go beyond the ordinary, you will be granted extraordinary experiences [*idhā kharaqta’l-‘āda khuriqat fī ḥaqqika’l-‘āda*]. You must work for change, until Allāh effects change for you. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh does not change what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves. (13:11)

You must expel your lower self and creatures from your heart, and fill it with their Creator [*Mukawwīn*], until He assigns creative power [*takwīn*] to you. This is something that comes about not through fasting by day and keeping vigil by night, but through the purity of hearts and the serenity of innermost beings [*asrār*]. A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “Fasting [*ṣiyām*] and vigil [*qiyām*] are vinegar and salad on the table, but the meal is

something else.” He spoke the truth. These two are the initial appetizer, then comes the serving up of dish after dish of food, then the eating, then the washing of hands. Then comes the meeting with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then the robes of honor, the granting of fiefdoms [*iqṭāʿ*], appointment to high command, the delegation of authority, and the handing over of towns and citadels. When the servant’s heart is worthy of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and established in His nearness, he is granted dominion and sovereignty in the countries of the earth. He is charged with spreading the message [*daʿwa*] among the people, and with patient endurance of the trouble they cause. He is charged with changing what is false and manifesting the truth. The Lord gives to him and makes him free from want, because when He gives, He enriches. He fills his inside with elements of wisdom [*ḥikam*]. Throughout the lands of the hearts of His servants who are worthy of Him [*ṣāliḥūn lahu*] and who really know Him [*ʿarīfūn bihi*], the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has placed rivers of wisdom. Springing from the river bed of His knowledge [*ilm*], from the presence of His Throne [*ʿarsh*] and His Tablet [*lawḥ*], they flow into the lands of dead hearts that are ignorant of Him and disposed to avoid Him.

O young man! Eating unlawful food [*ḥarām*] will kill your heart, while eating lawful food [*ḥalāl*] will bring it to life. One mouthful will enlighten your heart, while another mouthful will obscure it. One mouthful will cause you to concentrate on this world, while another mouthful will make you focus on the hereafter. One mouthful will make you abstain from both worlds, while another mouthful will arouse your interest in their Creator. Unlawful food will cause you to be preoccupied with this world and make you fond of committing acts of disobedience, while permissible [*mubāḥ*] food will focus your attention on the hereafter and make you fond of performing acts of obedience, and completely lawful [*ḥalāl*] food will bring your heart near to the Master [*al-Mawlā*].

These foods can be distinguished only through real knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and real knowledge of Him resides only in the heart, not in the archives [*daḥātīr*]. It comes from Him, not from His creatures. Real knowledge of Allāh

(Almighty and Glorious is He) is obtained only after putting His rules [*ḥukm*] into practice, after accepting the truth [*taṣḍīq*] and being truthful [*ṣīdq*], after affirming the Oneness [*tawḥīd*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and having trust [*thiqa*] in Him, and after departing from creatures altogether. How can you really know the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), when all you really know is what you eat, drink, wear and have sexual intercourse with, and when you do not care what quarter it comes from? Surely you have heard the saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

If a person does not care about the source of his food and drink, Allāh will not care about which gate of the Fire [of Hell] He makes him enter.

After some discussion, the Shaikh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) went on to say:

So do not care about things at all, do not wish for anything and let nothing distract you from Him. You must not let creatures hold you from Him, although you should talk to them in terms they can understand, and treat them charitably through gentle courtesy, acting in accordance with the saying of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

To treat people with gentle courtesy is an act of charity [*sadaqa*].

You must give them part of the gift of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Be generous with them in sharing some of His generosity toward you. Treat them kindly and graciously and be tolerant toward them. Your moral character [*khulq*] should be based on the ethics [*akhlāq*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and your conduct on His commandment.

There are two types of Shaikh: The Shaikh of legality [*shaikh al-ḥukm*] and the Shaikh of knowledge [*shaikh al-‘ilm*]. The Shaikh of legality will guide you to the door of the creation, while the Shaikh of knowledge will guide you to the door of the nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Two doors, both of which you are obliged to enter: The door of the creation [*khalq*] and the door of the Creator [*Khāliq*]; the door of this world and the door of the hereafter. One of them follows the other. The door of the creation comes first, and the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) comes

second. You cannot see the latter door until you pass through the first door. You must go out of this world with your heart in order to enter the other world. You must serve the Shaikh of legality until he introduces you to the Shaikh of knowledge. You must leave creatures behind until you really know the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). These are stages, one stage after the other, and the two are opposites that cannot be combined. These things are opposites, so do not try to lump them together, because you will not succeed. Empty your heart, which is the house of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Leave nothing in it besides Him. Since the angels (peace be upon them) will not enter a house in which there is an image [*ṣūra*], why should the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) enter into your heart while it contains images and idols [*aṣnām*]? Everything apart from Him is an idol [*ṣanam*], so smash the idols and purify this house, then you may experience the presence of its Owner [*ṣāhib*] within it. You will experience wonders the like of which you never experienced before.

O Allāh, help us to achieve what will make You well pleased with us!

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Forty-fifth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of the 26th of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Accursed, accursed is he whose trust is in a creature like himself.

How many are those who have come under this curse! Out of very many people there is but one who trusts in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and someone who trusts in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)

has grasped the most secure handle. (2:256)

As for someone who trusts in a creature similar to himself, he is like a person clutching at water; he opens his hand and sees nothing in it.

Woe unto you! Creatures may fulfill your needs for a day or two or three, for a month, for a year or two, but they eventually get bored with you. You must seek the companionship of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and lay your needs down before Him, for He will never get bored with you, nor will He grow weary of your needs in this world and the hereafter.

When his affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawḥīd*] becomes strong, he who affirms it [*al-muwahḥid*] is left with no father, no mother, no family, no friend, no foe, no wealth, no social status and nothing at all to rely on. He is left with nothing apart from clinging to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His gracious favors. O you who trust in the *dīnār* [gold coin] and the *dirham* [small silver coin] in your hand, they will very soon leave your possession, as a punishment for you. It seems you wanted them badly when they were held by someone else, so they were taken away from him and handed over to

you, in order that you might use them in obedience to your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He); but then you made them your idol [ṣanam].

O ignorant one, you must acquire knowledge for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and put it into practice, for He will educate you. Knowledge [ʿilm] is life and ignorance [jahl] is death. When the champion of truth [ṣiddīq] has finished studying common knowledge, he is introduced to the study of special knowledge, the knowledge of hearts and innermost beings [asrār]. Then, when he has mastered this knowledge, he becomes the ruler [sulṭān] of the religion [dīn] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), commanding and prohibiting, giving and withholding on the authority of the One who has installed him in power [musalṭīn]. He becomes a ruler over the people, commanding what Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) commands and forbidding what He forbids, taking from them as He commands and giving to them as He commands. Thus he is with them in regard to the rule of law [hukm], and with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in regard to knowledge [ʿilm]. The rule of law is a doorman [bawwāb] at the door [bāb], while knowledge is inside the house. The rule of law is general [ʿāmm], while knowledge is specific [khāṣṣ]. The knower [ʿarif] applies at the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and he is granted intimate knowledge [ʿilm al-maʿrifa] and information [iṭṭilāʿ] concerning matters about which others are uninformed. He is ordered to give, so he gives. He is ordered to withhold, so he withholds. He is ordered to eat, so he eats. He is ordered to go hungry, so he goes hungry. He is ordered to approach one individual and to avoid another. He is ordered to take from one person and to give back to another. Successful are those who support him, and failures are those who let him down.

The people [of the Lord] will come to you, and for your benefit, not because of their needs. They have no need of any creature. The ropes of creatures they splice, their buildings they construct, and toward them they are sympathetic. They are the experts [jahābidha] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in this world and the hereafter. Whatever you take from them is for your benefit, not theirs. Their job is to offer good counsel to people and to persist in doing so, because

whenever something is from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) it is lasting and enduring, which is not the case with anything from any other source.

You must serve knowledge and the scholars who put their knowledge into practice [*al-‘ulamā’ al-‘ummāl*], and in this you must persevere. If you first persevere in the service of knowledge, it will inevitably serve you later. It will persevere in your service as you have persevered in its service. If you persevere in the service of knowledge, you will be granted the understanding of the heart [*fiqh al-qalb*] and the light of the inner [*nūr al-bāṭin*].

O my people! Commit your affairs to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for He knows you better than you do. Look forward to His relief, for respite is granted from time to time. Serve the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Open His door and close the doors of creatures, for He will show you marvels you could never imagine.

Woe unto you! If you want Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to let you benefit at the hands of people, He will let you benefit, and if you want Him to let you suffer injury at their hands, this will happen. He is the Subjugator [*al-Musakhkhir*], the Softener [*al-Mulayyin*] and the Hardener [*al-Muqassī*] of hearts. He is the One who brings to life [*al-Muhyī*] and the One who causes death [*al-Mumīt*], the Giver [*al-Mu‘īṭ*] and the Withholder [*al-Māni‘*]. He is the Honorer [*al-Mu‘izz*] and the Abaser [*al-Mudhill*]. He is the One who causes sickness [*al-Mumrid*] and the One who restores to health [*al-Mu‘āfi*]. He is the One who satisfies [*al-Mushabbi‘*] and the One who causes hunger [*al-Mujawwi‘*]. He is the One who clothes [*al-Muksi*] and the One who strips naked [*al-Mu‘arrī*]. He is the Benefactor [*al-Muḥsin*] and the Desolator [*al-Mūḥish*]. He is the First [*al-Awwal*] and the Last [*al-Ākhir*], the Outer [*aḡ-Ẓāhir*] and the Inner [*al-Bāṭin*]. All this is He, no other but He.

You must believe this firmly with your heart, and cultivate good relations with creatures with your outer [*ẓāhir*]. This is the task of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], the pious [*muttaqūn*]. They dedicate themselves to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances, and treat people with gentle courtesy. They talk to them in a way that is intelligible to their hearts, in a good-natured manner in keeping with the moral character of the Book and the Sunna, and they instruct them

in what these two contain. If people are receptive, they let them know that they appreciate this response. But if people deviate from these two standards, no friendship or courtesy can remain between them; they may treat people impolitely where the commandments and prohibitions of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) are at stake. You must make your heart a place of worship [*masjid*]. Do not pray to anyone along with Allāh. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And the places of worship [*masājid*] belong to Allāh, so do not pray to anyone along with Allāh. (72:18)

When the level of this servant's development has progressed from Islām to belief [*īmān*], from belief to conviction [*iqān*], from conviction to experience [*ma'rifa*], from experience to knowledge [*ilm*], from knowledge to loving [*maḥabba*], from loving to being loved [*maḥbūbiyya*], from his seeking [*ṭalab*] to his being sought [*maṭlūbiyya*], he is now at the stage where if he is careless he is not forsaken, if he forgets he is reminded, if he falls asleep he is awakened, if he is absent-minded he is brought to his senses, if he turns back he is brought forward, and if he is silent he is made to speak. Thus he always stays awake and clear [*ṣāfi*], because the vessel of his heart has become so clear that its inner [*bāṭin*] can be seen from its outer [*ẓāhir*].

He has inherited wakefulness [*yaqẓa*] from his Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him), whose eyes would go to sleep but not his heart, and who used to see what was behind him just as he could see what was in front of him. The wakefulness of each individual is commensurate with his spiritual state [*ḥāl*]. As for the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), no one attains to his degree of wakefulness, and no one is capable of sharing his special characteristics [*khaṣā'is*] with him, although the *Abdāl* and *Awliyā'* among his Community [*umma*] do receive the leftovers of his food and drink. They are granted a drop from the oceans of his spiritual stations [*maqāmāt*] and an atom from the mountains of his charismatic gifts [*karāmāt*], because they are his heirs [*wurrāth*], the tenacious adherents and supporters of his religion [*dīn*], to which they are the guides. They are the propagators of knowledge of his religion and his sacred law [*shar'*]. May the peace of Allāh and His salutations [*taḥiyyāt*] be upon them and upon their inheritors [*wārithūn*] until the Day of Resurrection.

The believer [*mu'min*] caught a glimpse of this world [as of a woman], so he desired her and courted her and his heart became full of her. But she wanted to control him, so he divorced her. Then he went in search of the hereafter until he found her. His heart became full of her, but he began to fear that she would tie him down and keep him away from his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he divorced her and set her aside along with this world. Having discharged his obligations toward her, he moved to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), where he set up camp and used its threshold as a pillow. He followed the religious rite [*milla*] of the Lord's friend Abraham [*Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl*] (peace be upon him), who renounced [the worship of] the stars, then the moon, then the sun, and then:

He said: "I love not things that set.... I have turned my face toward Him who created the heavens and the earth, as a man of pure faith [*hanīfan*], and I am not of the idolaters." (6:76–79)

When he [the believer] had long been resting his head on the threshold, and the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) had recognized his sincerity [*ṣidq*] in the quest, He opened the door and permitted his heart to enter His presence. Then He informed him about his condition and what he had experienced with this world and the other world, He being More Knowledgeable [*A'lam*] about this than the believer. Thus He narrated his story to him, then drew him near, befriended him, talked to him, invested him with the robe of His good pleasure, and filled him with His wisdom [*ḥikma*] and His knowledge [*ilm*]. Summoning his two divorcees, He renewed his marriage [*ʿaqd*] to the pair of them, wrote a legal contract [*qaḍiyya*] between him and them, stipulated that the two must refrain from causing trouble, made them his servants who must provide him with everything due to him from them, and charged them with affection for him. The situation was transformed as far as the believer was concerned. The station of his heart was now in the presence of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and he abandoned everything apart from Him. He became a free slave [*abd ḥurr*]¹—a slave to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), free from everything apart from Him, at liberty on the earth and in heaven, controlled by nothing but controlling things. He became a king who is subject to no one but the King. The door stood open before him with absolute license—no doorman and no gatekeeper.

O young man! Be the page boy of the people [of the Lord], for this world and the hereafter are at their service. At any time they wish, they take from them with the permission of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They will give you outer form [ṣūra] from this world and inner meaning [ma' nā] in the hereafter.

O Allāh, distinguish [ʿarrif] between us and them in this world and the hereafter!

Forty-sixth Discourse

It was in the early morning of Sunday, the 28th of Rajab, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

This world is a market that will soon be closed. You must lock the doors of the contemplation of creatures, and open the door of the contemplation of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must close the doors of acquisition and material means [*asbāb*], [and enter] into the state of purity of heart and nearness of the innermost being [*sirr*], into that which is special to you, not that which is commonplace for others among your relatives and attendants. The earning should therefore be for others, the benefit should be for others and the income should be for others. You must seek what is specially for you from the tray of His bountiful favor. Seat your lower selves [*nufūs*] with this world, your hearts with the hereafter, and your innermost beings [*asrār*] with the Master [*al-Mawlā*]. Surely you know what you wish for.

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also went on to say:

The people [of the Lord] are the deputies [*abdāl*] of the Prophets [*anbiyā'*], so you should accept the instructions they give you, for they will tell you to do what is commanded by Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger, and forbid you to do what is forbidden by them. They are made to speak, so they speak. Things are given to them, so they take. None of their movements are motivated by their natural impulses [*ṭibā'*] and their lower selves [*nufūs*]. Not because of their passions [*ahwiya*] do they participate with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in His religion [*dīn*]. They have followed the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in his words and his

actions. They have heeded the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. Whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. And keep your duty to Allāh. (59:7)

They have followed the Messenger [*Rasūl*] (Allāh bless him and give him peace) until he conveyed them to the Sender [*Mursil*]. They have drawn near to him, so he has brought them near to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He has issued them with titles, robes of honor and command over creatures. O hypocrites, you reckoned that the religion was a spent force and that the [divine] commandment was to no effect. No respect is due to you, nor to your devils and your wicked comrades.

O Allāh, relent toward me and toward them, and deliver them from the degradation of hypocrisy [*nifāq*] and the chain of idolatry [*shirk*]!

You must worship Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and support that worship through earning a lawful [*ḥalāl*] livelihood. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) loves an obedient, believing servant who eats of what He has made lawful. He loves those who eat and work, while He hates those who eat but do not work. He loves those who eat because of what they earn, while He hates those who eat because of their hypocrisy and their reliance on creatures. He loves the person who affirms His Oneness [*muwahḥid bihi*] and hates the one who associates partners with Him [*mushrik bihi*]. He loves anyone who submits to Him [*musallim ilaihi*] and hates anyone who quarrels with Him. One of the prerequisites of love is compliance, and one of the prerequisites of enmity is contradiction. You must submit to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and gladly accept His management [*tadbīr*] in this world and the hereafter.

A few days ago I suffered an affliction, so I begged Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to take it away. He thereupon gave me an extra trial on top of it. I was perplexed by this, but then there was someone saying to me: “Did you not tell us: ‘In the state you are in as a novice, your case is the case of submission [*taslīm*].’” So I learned my lesson and held my tongue.

Woe unto you! You claim to love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), but you love others besides Him. He is purity [*ṣafāʾ*], while all the

rest is murky confusion [*kadar*], so if you muddy that purity with the love of others, He will be vexed with you. He will do to you what He did to His friend Abraham [*Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl*] and to Jacob (peace be upon them both). When each devoted part of his heart to his son, He inflicted trials on them both in connection with their offspring. Also our Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace)—when he became attached to his daughter’s two sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain, Gabriel (peace be upon him) came to him and said: “Do you love the two of them?” “Yes,” he replied, so Gabriel told him: “As for one of the pair, he will be given poison to drink, and as for the other, he will be slain.” They therefore went out of his heart, as he emptied it for his Master (Almighty and Glorious is He), and his delight in his two grandsons turned into sadness over them. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is very Jealous [*Ghayūr*] of the hearts of His Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*], His saints [*awliyāʾ*] and His righteous servants [*ʿibād ṣāliḥūn*].

O you who seek to grasp this world with your hypocrisy, open your hand and you will see that there is nothing in it! Woe unto you! You have abstained from earning and have settled down to consume people’s goods on the strength of your religion [*dīn*]. Earning [*kasb*] has been the practice of all the Prophets. There was never one of them who did not have a craft or trade [*ṣanʿa*], and where otherworldly interests were concerned, they accepted things from people with the permission of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O you who are drunk on the wine of this world, its lusts and its follies, you will soon sober up in your grave!

Forty-seventh Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, on Tuesday the 1st of Sha‘bān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

Study, then practice. Be sincere. Be detached from you and from all creatures, and:

Say, “Allāh!” then leave them to their idle prattling. (6:91)

Say, as Abraham (peace be upon him) said:

They are enemies to me, except the Lord of the Worlds. (26:77)

You should keep away from creatures and regard them with repugnance, as long as you see them as harmful. Then, when your affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] has become genuine and the filth of idolatry [*shirk*] has left your heart, you must go back to them, be sociable with them, give them the benefit of the knowledge you possess, and guide them to the door of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Death for the élite [*khawass*] means dying to the entire creation, dying to self-will [*irāda*] and choice [*ikhtiyār*]. When someone has truly experienced such a death, he attains to the life everlasting [*al-ḥayāt al-abadiyya*] in the company of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). His outer death will be but a momentary stroke, a momentary faint, a momentary daze, a nodding off to sleep and then an awakening. If you wish for such a death, you must take the drug [*banj*] of intimate knowledge [*ma‘rifat*], nearness and sleep on the threshold of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), until the Hand of Mercy [*raḥma*] and Grace [*minna*] takes hold of you and revives you to an eternal life.

The lower self [*nafs*] has its food, the heart [*qalb*] has its food, and the innermost being [*sirr*] has its food. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

I stay in the presence of my Lord, so He feeds me and lets me drink.

Meaning: “He feeds my innermost being with significant values [ma‘ānī]. He feeds my spirit [rūḥ] with spirituality [rūḥāniyya]. He nourishes me with food that is specially appropriate for me.” At first both his outer form [qālab] and his heart [qalb] were made to ascend [‘urija], then after that the outer form was held back and he began to ascend with his heart and his innermost being, while he was still present among the people. Such is also the case with his heirs [wurrāth] in reality [‘ala’l-ḥaqīqa], who combine knowledge, practice, sincerity and the education of the people.

O my people! Eat the leftovers of the people [of the Lord]! Drink what is left behind in their goblets! O you who lay claim to knowledge [‘ilm], there is no point to your knowledge without practice, and there is no point to your practice without sincerity, because it is a body without a spirit [rūḥ]. The token of your sincerity [ikhlās] is that you are indifferent to the praise of creatures as well as to their blame, and that you do not covet what they hold in their possession. You would rather give Lordship [rubūbiyya] its due, working for the sake of the Benefactor [Mun‘im], not for the benefit [ni‘ma], for the Owner [Mālik] and not for the property [milk], for the Truth [Ḥaqq] and not for falsehood [bāṭil]. What creatures have is a shell, and what the Creator has is a kernel [lubb], so when your belief in Him and the sincerity of your devotion to Him are genuine, and your stance before Him is constant, He will nourish you with the oil of this kernel. He will give you insight into the kernel of the kernel [lubbu’l-lubb], the secret of the secret [sirru’s-sirr] and the meaning of the meaning [ma‘na’l-ma‘nā], for at this stage you will be utterly naked of everything apart from Him. This nakedness [ta‘arrī] applies to the heart, not to the body. The abstinence [zuhd] applies to the heart, not to the body. The renunciation [i‘rād] applies to the innermost being [sirr], not to the outer [zāhir]. The insight is into contents [ma‘ānī], not constructs [mabānī]. The contemplation is of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), not of creatures. The central point is that you will be with Him, not with creatures. This world and the hereafter will cease to exist in relation to you. There will be no this world and no hereafter. There will be nothing apart from Him.

Blissful are the lovers [muḥibbūn] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), they who are His special favorites [khawāṣṣ] among His creatures, because of their physical ordeal. The martyrs [shuhadā’] are those who

are slain by the swords of the unbelievers, as a trial for their bodies, so how about the martyrs who are slain by the swords of love [*maḥabbā*]?

It is only because of sins that buildings and structures are overwhelmed by devastation. Just look at places in ruin. The sins of their inhabitants have laid them waste, because sins ruin cities [*bilād*] and destroy human beings [*ibād*]. Likewise in your own case, your physical structure is a city; if you commit sins within it, devastation will befall it. If you sin, ruin will come to your physical body, then to the body of your religion [*dīn*]. Blindness will come to you, as will chronic illness, deafness and the loss of strength. Various diseases will come to you. Poverty will come to you, wrecking your storehouse and making you turn in need to your friends and your foes.

Woe unto you, O hypocrite! Do not try to deceive the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You do a good deed and pretend that it is for His sake, when it is actually done to impress people. You put on a show for them, treat them with hypocrisy and flatter them, while you forget your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will very soon leave this world as a bankrupt. O you who are inwardly sick, you must take your medicine, and this medicine is to be found only with the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] among the servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Get the medicine from them and use it, then you will acquire permanent well-being and everlasting health for your character [*maʿnā*], your heart, your innermost being [*ṣirr*] and your private relationship [*khalwa*] with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). The eyes of your heart will open, and with them you will behold your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will come to be one of the lovers who are always standing at His door, paying no attention to anything apart from Him. As for a heart containing heresy [*bidʿa*], how can it contemplate the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)?

O my people! Follow [the Book and the Sunna] and do not introduce heretical innovations. Conform and do not contradict. Obey and do not sin. Be sincere and do not attribute partners [to Allāh]. Affirm the Oneness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and never leave His door. Beg of Him and do not beg of anyone other than Him. Ask Him for help and do not seek help from anyone other than Him. Trust in Him and do not trust in anyone other than Him. And as for you, O special few [*khawāṣṣ*], you must submit your lower selves [*nufūs*]

to Him, gladly accept His plan for you, and concentrate on remembering Him rather than asking Him for things. Surely you have heard His saying (Almighty and Glorious is He) in one of His Books:

When someone is too busy remembering Me to ask Me for anything, I give him the best of what I give to those who ask.

O you who are preoccupied with His remembrance [*dhikr*], and whose heart is broken on account of Him, are you not well satisfied with His giving Himself to you as your boon companion [*jalīs*]? As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in one of His utterances:

I am the boon companion of one who remembers Me.

He has also said:

I am with those who are broken-hearted on account of Me.

O young man! Through your remembrance of Him your heart draws near to Him. You enter the house of His nearness and become a guest of His. The guest is treated with honor, especially the guest of the King. How long will you go on being distracted from this King [*Malik*] by power [*mulk*] and possessions [*milk*]? Soon you must part with your power and your possessions. Soon you will arrive in the other world, and it will seem to you as if this world never was, while the hereafter has never ceased to be. Do not run away from me because of my personal poverty, for I have all I need without you and without all the folk of the East and the West. I want you only for your sake. I am splicing your ropes.

Do not be heretical, and do not introduce unprecedented innovations into the religion [*dīn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Follow the two honest witnesses, the Book and the Sunna, for they will escort you to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you are guilty of heretical innovation [*mubtadi'*], however, your witnesses are your mind [*ʿaql*] and your passions [*hawā*], so they will certainly escort you to the Fire [of Hell] and team you up with Pharaoh and Hāmān and their cohorts. Do not cite destiny [*qadar*] as a pretext, because this will not be accepted of you. You simply must enter the abode of knowledge [*ʿilm*] and learning [*taʿallum*], then of practice [*ʿamal*], then of sincere devotion [*ikhhlās*]. Nothing comes about because of you, yet you are indispensable. You must apply your energy to the pursuit of knowledge and practice,

and not to the pursuit of this world. Your energy will soon be spent, so use it to strive for that which is beneficial to you.

A man approached [the Shaikh], became ecstatic [*tawājada*] and said:

“What has been offered to this bride as a token to bring her good luck?”

He replied:

“A wink from the sheep before the wedding feast.”

O young man! Venture forth and find your way to the good pleasure of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for when He is well pleased with you He will love you. Dispel anxiety about sustenance [*rizq*] from your heart, then sustenance will come to you from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) without toil or trouble on your part. Dispel concerns from your heart and let there be but one, namely the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for if you do this He will satisfy all concerns. Your concern is what is important to you [*hammuka mā ahammaka*]. If your concern is this world, then you are with it. If your concern is the hereafter, then you are with it. If creatures are your concern, then you are with them. And if your concern is the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you are with Him in this world and the hereafter.

Forty-eighth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 8th of Sha‘bān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

If someone dresses up to please other people, but behaves offensively toward Allāh, when he meets Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) it will be to find that he has incurred His wrath.

Hear the words of Prophecy [*nubuwwa*], O hypocrites! O you who trade the hereafter for this world! O you who trade the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) for creatures! O you who trade what is lasting for that which must pass away, your trading will result in loss and your capital goods will disappear. Alas for you, you are incurring the disgust of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His displeasure, because when someone puts on an empty show for the sake of people, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is disgusted with him. You must adorn your outer [*ẓāhir*] with the good manners of the sacred law [*shar‘*], and your inner [*bāṭin*] by expelling creatures from it. You must shut them out and let them cease to exist as far as your heart is concerned, as if they had never been created. Do not regard them as having any power to cause harm or benefit. You have been preoccupied with the adornment of the outer form [*qālab*], and have neglected the adornment of the heart [*qalb*]. The way to adorn the heart is through the affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*], sincerity [*ikhhlās*] and trust [*thiqa*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and through remembrance [*dhikr*] of Him and forgetfulness of everything other than Him. Jesus (peace be upon him) is reported as having said:

A righteous deed is one that is done without wishing to be praised for it.

O idiots, O you who are insane in relation to the hereafter, but intelligent in relation to this world, this intelligence will do you no good. You must work hard at acquiring faith, then faith may accrue to you. You must repent, apologize, feel remorse and let your eyes send tears rolling down your cheeks, for weeping from fear of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) extinguishes the fires of the wrath of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you repent with your heart, the light of sincere repentance will shine on your face.

O young man! You must strive to keep your secret [*sirr*] whenever you are capable of doing so, then you will be excused if ecstasy [*ghalaba*] comes upon you. Love [*hubb*] demolishes the walls of privacy and concealment, the walls of modesty, the walls of existence [*wujūd*], the walls of attention to creatures. The pretentious [*mutakallif*] is ordered out, while the conscientious [*mukallaf*] who is overcome with rapture [*maghlūb*] will anoint his eyes with the dust of his feet, because the former is self-centered [*nafsī*] and the latter is heart-centered [*qalbī*], the one is creaturely [*khalqī*] and the other is Lordly [*rabbānī*].

Make it your endeavor not that you shall be [*lā an takūna anta*], but rather that He shall be [*bal an yakūna Huwa*]. Endeavor to make no move toward staving off injury or procuring benefit, for if you work at this, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will appoint someone to serve you and to keep harm away from you. Be with Him like a corpse with the washer of the dead [*ghāsil*], and like the People of the Cave with Gabriel (peace be upon him). Be with Him without existence [*wujūd*], without choice [*ikhtiyār*] and without any forward planning [*tadbīr*]. Stand firm before Him on the two feet of your faith [*īmān*] and your certitude [*yaqīn*] when receiving the burdens of His judgments [*aqdiya*] and decrees [*aqdār*]. Faith stands and holds its ground in the presence of destiny, while hypocrisy [*nifāq*] runs away. With the passage of the days and nights, the hypocrite becomes physically slim, while his lower self [*nafs*], his passions [*hawā*] and his natural impulses [*tabʿ*] grow fat, and the eyes of his innermost being [*sirr*] and his heart turn blind. The door of his house is in good repair, while the interior of the house is a wreck. His remembrance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is with his tongue, not with his heart. His indignation is for his own sake, not for the sake of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

In the case of the believer the very opposite is true. His remembrance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is with his tongue and with his heart, although most of the time his heart is remembering while his tongue is silent. His indignation is for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger, not for the sake of his lower self, his passions, his natural impulses and his worldly interests. He does not envy and he does not incite envy, and he does not quarrel with lucky people over their good luck.

O young man! Beware! Beware of quarreling with a lucky person, for he will be saved and promoted, while you will be wiped out, go down, suffer humiliation and be disgraced. How can you change his luck by contesting it, when his situation is predetermined by Allāh's foreknowledge? If you challenge the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) over His foreknowledge concerning you and others, you will fall from His sight and your knowledge will be useless to you. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Toiling, weary. (88:3)

You must repent right now to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The innocent is clever. Do not turn back from aspiring to Him on account of some trial He has inflicted upon you. Wait for it to be lifted from you and do not despair, for relief may come at any moment.

Every day He is about some awesome business. (55:29)

He transfers things from one set of people to another. You must be patient with Him and willingly accept His ordainment [*taqdīr*], because:

You do not know, it may be that Allāh will afterward bring some new thing to pass. (65:1)

If you are patient, He will alleviate your misfortune and bring about a new state of affairs, one that is to His liking and also to your liking. If you are impatient and uncooperative, however, He will cause misfortune to weigh more heavily upon you. He will give you still more of it, as a punishment for your obstructive attitude toward Him. What causes your obstructive and contentious attitude toward Him (Almighty and Glorious is He) is your attachment to your lower selves [*nufūs*], your passions [*ahwīya*] and your personal inclinations [*aghrād*], your love of this world and your greedy desire to amass what it has to offer.

O my people! If there is nothing else for it, let your lower selves be at the door of this world, your hearts at the door of the hereafter, and your innermost beings [*asrār*] at the door of the Master [*al-Mawlā*], until such time as your lower self [*nafs*] is transformed into a heart [*qalb*] and tastes its experience, your heart is transformed into an innermost being [*sirr*] and tastes its experience, and your innermost being is transformed into a state of annihilation [*fanā'*] in which there is nothing to taste or be experienced. Then He will bring you back to life for His sake, not for the sake of any other than Him. At this stage an alchemy [*kīmiyā'*] will occur, so that every dirham [small coin] from Him turns into a thousand weights of brass, which He converts into gold. This is the ultimate objective, total, fundamental and permanent. Blessed is he who grasps what I am saying and believes in it! Blessed is he who puts it into practice and is sincere about it! Blessed is he who takes the work in hand, for it will bring him near to the One for whose sake the work is done!

O young man! When I die you will see me and recognize me. You will see me to your right and to your left, taking up your case, defending you and pleading on your behalf. How long will you go on idolizing and relying on creatures? You ought to know that not one of them can bring you benefit or cause you harm, be he rich or poor, distinguished or humble. You must turn to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not rely on creatures, nor on your earnings and your power and strength. Rely on the gracious favor of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Rely on the One who has enabled you to earn and provided you with the means to do so. When you act like this, He will let you travel in His company and He will show you the marvels of His power [*qudra*] and His preordainment [*sābiqa*]. He will conduct your heart to Him, then, when it has attained to Him, He will cause it to remember its bygone days, just as the inhabitants of Paradise remind one another in the Garden of the days spent in this lower world.

If you break through the net of secondary cause [*sabab*], you will arrive at the Prime Cause [*al-Musabbib*]. If you break through the ordinary, you will experience the extraordinary [*idhā kharaqta'l-āda khuriqat laka'l-āda*]. He who serves, is served. He who obeys, is obeyed. He who honors, is honored. He who draws near is drawn near. He who humbles

himself is raised up high. He who treats with generosity is treated with generosity. He who is well behaved is brought near. Good behavior [*ḥusn al-adab*] will bring you near, while bad behavior [*sū' al-adab*] will keep you at a distance. Good behavior is being obedient to Allāh, while bad behavior is disobedience to Him.

O my people! Do not put off your self-inspection and self-examination. Subject yourselves to this promptly, in this world before the hereafter. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will surely be diffident about calling for accounts from those of His servants who exercise pious restraint [*al-mutawarri'un*] in this world.

You must practice pious restraint [*wara'*], otherwise your only catch will be disappointment. Be restrained in your conduct in this world, otherwise your desires will come to grief in this world and the hereafter. This world is the abode of fire [*ad-dunyā dār an-nār*], and money is the abode of care [*ad-dirham dār al-hamm*],—especially when you get possession of them by unlawful means and deal with them in ways that are unlawful [*ḥarām*]. Tomorrow will show you clearly the meaning of what I am telling you now. Today you are blind and deaf. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Your love of the thing makes you blind and deaf.

Strip your heart bare of this world and make it go hungry and thirsty, until the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) gives it clothing and food and drink. Submit your outer [*ẓāhir*] and your inner [*bāṭin*] to Him, and make no plans, but rather be He-without-you [*Huwa bi-lā anta*]. You should always be a day-laborer, because this world is the domain of work, while the hereafter is the domain of the salary [*ujra*], the domain of the gift, the domain of the donation. This is the normal situation where the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] are concerned. As for the rare case among them, this is a person whom He takes away from work in this world, treating him with special favor and mercy and granting him comfort in advance, before the advent of the hereafter. He requires of him only the performance of the obligatory religious duties [*farā'id*] and relieves him of those that are supererogatory [*nawāfil*], for obligatory religious duty [*fard*] is never canceled in any of the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] and stations

[*maqāmāt*]. This applies only to a few individuals among the servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and constitutes the rarest of all rarities.

O young man! Practice abstinence and renunciation, so that you may enjoy comfort in the here and now. If you have an allotted share [*qism*] of worldly goods, it is bound to come your way. Your allotted shares will come to you, while you are respected, honored and in a position of responsibility. You must not eat because of your lower self and your passions, for this is an obstacle that will screen your heart from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). The believer does not eat for the sake of his lower self and because of his lower self, nor does he dress to please it. Rather than living to eat, he eats to live, to have enough strength to obey Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He eats what he needs to keep the feet of his outer being [*ẓāhir*] firmly planted in His presence. He eats in accordance with the sacred law [*sharʿ*], not from desire.

The saint [*walī*], eats because of the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), while the *Badal*, who is the minister [*wazīr*] of the *Qutb*, eats through the action [*fiʿl*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). As for the *Qutb*, his eating and his general conduct [*taṣarruf*] are like the eating and the general conduct of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). How could it not be so, when he is his servant [*ghulām*], his deputy [*nāʾib*] and his vicegerent [*khalīfa*] in his Community [*umma*]? He is the vicegerent of the Messenger, the vicegerent of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). This [*Qutb*] is an inner vicegerent [*khalīfa bāṭin*], while the Imām of the Muslims, who heads them as their leader, is an outer vicegerent [*khalīfa ẓāhir*], the one whom no Muslim is permitted to refuse to follow and obey. It has been said that, if he is just [*ʿādil*], the Imām of the Muslims is the *Qutb* of the Age.

You must not think the matter unimportant. It may be that someone is put in charge of you to assess your outer actions [*afʿāl ẓāhira*], but he also assesses your inner actions [*afʿāl bāṭina*]. There is not one of you who will not be brought forth on the Day of Resurrection, accompanied by his angels who were in charge of him in this world, keeping a written record of his good and bad deeds. They will have with them ninety-nine lists, each list stretching as far as the eye can see, containing his good and bad deeds and everything attributable to him. He will be required to read them all aloud, so he will read them out. If he did not do well

in worldly matters, it will be recorded but not read out, because this world is the domain of Wisdom [*dār al-ḥikma*], while the hereafter is the domain of Power [*dār al-quḍra*]. This world needs material means [*asbāb*] and instruments [*ālāt*], while the hereafter has no need of these. If one of you should try to deny what his records contain, his physical limbs and organs will speak about what is in them. Each organ will speak emphatically about everything it ever did in this world. You have been created for a momentous purpose, but you do not have a clue. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

What, did you suppose that We had created you only for sport, and that you would not be brought back to Us? (23:115)

Forty-ninth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, on Friday the 11th of Sha‘bān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

It is related concerning ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak (may the mercy of Allāh the Exalted be upon him) that a beggar came to him one day, asking him for some food. He had nothing in store except for ten eggs, so he ordered his maidservant to give them to the beggar, but she gave him nine and hid one away. At the moment of the sun’s setting, a man came and knocked at the door, saying: “Take this basket from me!” So ‘Abdullāh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) went out to meet him and took the basket from him. Then he saw that it contained eggs, so he counted them and, lo and behold, there were ninety of them! He asked his maidservant: “Where is the other egg? How many did you give to the beggar?” She replied: “I gave him nine and left one for us to eat for breakfast.” So he told her: “You have made us lose ten!”

Such was their way of relating to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). They always had faith and believed in what is found in the Book and the Sunna. They were slaves of the Qur’ān. They would never go against it in anything they did, whether in action or at rest, whether taking or giving. They dealt with their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and found it profitable to deal with Him, so they made it their regular practice. They saw that His door was open, so they entered it, and they saw that everyone else’s door was closed, so they avoided it. They complied with His wishes regarding others, and did not comply with the wishes of others concerning Him. They concurred with Him in His hatred of those He hates and in His love of those He loves. This is why a certain wise man has said: “Agree with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) where creatures are concerned, but do not agree with

creatures where Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is concerned. He who gets broken, gets broken, and he who gets mended, gets mended.” The people [of the Lord] are always on the side of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They support Him against their own selves and against everyone else. They accept no blame directed at Him. They are afraid of no one when it comes to His rules [*ḥudūd*] and upholding His sacred law [*sharʿ*].

O young man! Give up this craziness in which you are involved, and follow the people [of the Lord] in their words and their actions. Do not expect to attain what they have attained, merely on the strength of a false claim. You must suffer misfortune with patience, as they have borne it with patience, so that you may attain to what they have attained. But for the trial of misfortune, human beings would all be pious servants, but tribulations befall them and they do not endure them patiently, so they block their way to the door of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). If a person cannot exercise patience, he cannot receive. If you are lacking in patience and willing acceptance, this will be a cause of your leaving your servitude [*ʿubūdiyya*] to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). As Allāh (Exalted is He) has said in one of His Books:

If someone does not gladly accept My judgment, and is not patient in bearing My tribulation, let him choose a god [*ilāh*] apart from Me.

Be satisfied with Him to the exclusion of all others, whether what has been decreed [*muqaddar*] is to your advantage or to your disadvantage. Make Islām a reality, so that you may attain to faith [*īmān*], then make faith a reality so that you may attain to conviction [*iqān*], for at that point you will experience what you never experienced before. Certitude will let you see things in their true form, as knowing by report gives way to witnessing directly, for it focuses the heart upon the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and shows it things as they come from Him. When the heart stands at the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), the Hand of noble generosity comes out to meet it and treats it generously. Thus it becomes noble and altruistic, behaving generously toward creatures and not begrudging them anything. The sound heart, one that is worthy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), is nobly generous [*karīm*]. The innermost being [*sirr*],

one that has been purified of murky confusion, is nobly generous. How could either of them not be so, when they have been treated generously by the Most Generous of the most generous [*Akram al-akramīn*]?

O my people! You must practice generosity [*karam*] and altruism [*īthār*] in obedience to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), not in disobedience to Him. Any blessing that is used for a sinful purpose is liable to be lost. Keep busy earning a livelihood, while practicing constant obedience, until nearness to Him comes to you, so your concerns will be connected with Him and in His company, not connected with others and not in the company of others. For then your eating will come to be from the tray of His gracious favor and generosity, in a way that is beyond your knowledge and understanding.

The self [*nafs*] is what keeps you screened from Him, so when it fades from the scene, the obstacle disappears. This is why Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) once said: “I saw my Lord in a dream, so I said to Him: ‘How is the way to You, O Creator God [*Bārī*’ *Khudā*]?’ He replied: ‘Leave your own self and come hither!’ So I sloughed it off as a snake sloughs off its skin.” The eye of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) was only on the self, not on anything else, and He ordered him to leave it behind because this world and what it contains, as well as everything whatsoever apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), is subordinate to the self. This world belongs to it and is its darling [*maḥbūba*], and the hereafter belongs to it too, for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And therein is all that selves [*anfus*] desire and eyes find sweet. (43:71)

After some discussion, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) went on to say:

By day they [the people of the Lord] are occupied with the welfare of creatures and dependents, and by night they are devoted to the service of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and are in seclusion with Him. In similar fashion, kings spend the whole day in the company of their attendants and retinue, dealing with the needs of the people; then, when night comes, they retire in privacy with their ministers [*wuzarāʾ*] and favorites [*khawāṣṣ*].

Listen to what I have to say—may Allāh (Exalted is He) have mercy upon you! —with the ears of your hearts, and commit it to memory and

put it into practice. I am stating only the truth from the Truth. I am simply stating the nature of the way of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). I am describing it so that you may travel along it. It does not satisfy me just to hear you tell me: "You have done well!" You must say to me with the tongues of your hearts: "You have done well!" Then you must act on what I am telling you, and be sincere in your actions, until I see this about you and I can say to you: "You have done well!"

How long will you go on worshipping your lower self [*nafs*], your worldly and otherworldly interests, creatures, and anything at all apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Creatures are the veil of your lower self, your lower self is the veil of your heart, and your heart is the veil of your innermost being [*sirr*]. As long as you remain attached to creatures, therefore, you cannot see your own lower self. If you renounce them, you will see it. You will see it as an enemy to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and to you, so you must wage war against it without ceasing, until it meekly accepts its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), feels assured of His promise [*wa'd*] and is afraid of His threat [*wa'id*], carries out His commandment and observes His prohibition, and yields to Him in compliance with His decree [*qadar*]. Then the veils will disappear from the heart and the innermost being, and they will see what they could never see before. They will come to know their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). They will take refuge with Him and will not become attached to anything apart from Him.

The knower [*'arif*] does not get attached to any thing, but sticks with the Creator of all things. He neither slumbers nor sleeps, and no tie keeps him from his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). The beloved [of Allāh] has no ordinary existence [*wujūd*]. He is in the valley of destiny [*qadar*] and knowledge [*'ilm*] of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). The waves of knowledge lift him up and set him down; they lift him up into the air, then set him down in the ends of the earth, while he is at a loss, perplexed, uncomprehending, deaf and dumb. He can hear from no one but the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and can see no one but Him, for he is a corpse in His presence. If He so wills, He resurrects him. If He so wishes, He brings him into being.

They [the people of the Lord] are always in the pavilion [*surādiq*] of nearness [to Him]. Thus, when the time for judgment [*ḥukm*] comes around, they are there in the court of judgment. When it is time to go out, they are there at the door, taking people's cases and acting as mediators [*wasā'it*] between them and the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). These are their spiritual states [*aḥwāl*], although part of their condition is kept secret.

O my people! What is this? You are in delusion. You are involved in a useless waste of time. Be patient with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and you will experience good things in this world and the hereafter. If you wish to make Islām a reality, you must practice obedient submission [*istislām*], and if you wish for nearness to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you must fall prostrate before His decree [*qadar*] and His action [*fi'l*]—with no “Why?” and no “How?”—for thus you will draw near to Him. You must not will anything, for it can do you no good. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

But you will not, unless Allāh wills. (76:30)

Since you cannot accomplish what you will, do not will! Do not challenge Him in His workings [*af'āl*]. If He takes away your honor, your property, your health and your children, and destroys your reputation, you must smile in the face of His decree [*qadar*], His will [*irāda*] and His transformative action [*tabdīl*]. This is how you must be, if you wish for His nearness, if you wish for pure serenity [*ṣafā'*] in His company. If you wish your heart to attain to Him while you are still in this world, you must hide your sorrow and let your cheerfulness show. You must be good-natured in your treatment of people. As Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The believer wears his cheerfulness on his face, while his sadness stays in his heart.

Do not complain to anyone, for when you complain about the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) you fall from His sight, while whatever you are complaining of does not go away and leave you. Do not take pride in any of your deeds, for pride corrupts the deed and destroys it. When a person recognizes the help [*tawfiq*] he is receiving from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), it becomes impossible for him to be conceited about any of his deeds. You must direct your every

aspiration toward Him, for He will bestow His mercy upon you and equip you with the means to reach Him. But how can you direct your aspiration toward Him, when you are false in everything you say and do, looking for praise from creatures and fearing their criticism? The path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is honesty [*sidq*] all the way. The people [of the Lord] have honesty without any falsehood, honesty with no pretense. Their actions are more frequent than their words. They are the deputies [*nuwwāb*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) among His creatures, His vicegerents [*khulafā'*] in charge of them, His experts [*jahābidha*] and His prefects [*shiḥan*] on His earth. They are those He has singled out as His special favorites [*khawāṣṣ*]. As for you, O hypocrite [*munāfiq*], you bear no comparison with them. You cannot match them with your hypocrisy. This is not something that comes about through inaction, wishful thinking and idle talk.

O Allāh, include us among the truthful ones [*ṣādiqūn*], and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

The Shaikh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) also said:

You must not content yourself with knowing their spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] by name alone, with adopting their style of dress and affecting their manner of speech. You will derive no benefit from this, as long as you contradict their actions. You are a murky confusion with no pure clarity, a creature with no Creator, a lower world with no hereafter, a vanity with no reality, an outer with no inner, a word with no deed, a deed with no sincerity, a sincerity with no adherence to the Sunna. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will surely not accept a word without a deed, or a deed without sincerity. Nor will He accept anything whatsoever that is not in conformity with His Book and the Sunna of His Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

You are making a claim without evidence, so it is certain that nothing will be accepted of you. You may gain the acceptance of creatures with your falsehood, but you will never gain the acceptance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is the Knower [*ʿĀlim*] of what

the hearts contain. Do not offer counterfeit coin, for the Assayer [Nāqid] has a very sharp eye. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) looks into your heart, not at your outer form. He looks at what lies behind the clothes and the skin and bones. He looks into your private room, not at your public show.

Have you no sense of shame? You have made what is visible to creatures look pretty, and what is visible to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) unclean. If you wish for salvation [falāh], you must repent all your sins and be sincere in your repentance. Repent your idolatrous worship [shirk] of creatures. Do nothing except for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). I see that you are wholly in error, because you are involved with the self, the passions, worldly interests, carnal desires and pleasures. A bug will annoy you; a trifle will make you angry. You are pleased because your lower self is pleased, and unhappy because of its unhappiness, for you are its slave and it holds your reins.

Where do you stand in relation to the servants [‘ibād] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for whom servitude [‘ubūdiyya] to Him and contentment with His workings have become realities? Adversities descend upon them, while they sit firm like the unshakable mountains. Misfortunes come at them and befall them, while they view them with the eye of patience and compliance. They have abandoned their physical bodies to the afflictions, and have flown to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) with their hearts, so they are tents without men, cages without birds. Their spirits [arwāh] are with Him and their bodies lie before Him.

O you who turn away from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)! O you who are isolated from Him! Come toward me, so that I may reconcile you with Him. Let me appeal to Him on your behalf. Let me obtain protection for you from Him. Let me offer humble entreaty in His presence, that He may waive in your favor the rights He has against you.

O Allāh, bring us back to You! Keep us stationed at Your door! Let us be Yours, in You and with You! Let us rejoice in serving You! Let our taking and our giving be for Your sake! Purify our inner beings [bawāṭin] of everything but You! May You not see us where You have

forbidden us to be, and may You not fail to find us where You have commanded us to be. Do not let our outers [*ẓawāhir*] commit sins against You, or our inners [*bawāṭin*] be guilty of attributing partners [*shirk*] to You. Take us from our own selves unto You. Let us belong wholly to You, rich in You beyond need of any other. Arouse us from heedlessness of You. Choose us for Your obedient and confidential service. Delight our hearts and our innermost beings [*asrār*] with Your nearness. Keep us as far from disobedience to You as You have kept the sky far from the earth, and let us be as near to obedience to You as You have put the iris near to the white of the eye. Keep us apart from what displeases You, as you kept Joseph and Zulaikhā from disobeying You.

The Shaikh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him also said:

You must dissolve your lower selves [*nufūs*], your passions [*ahwiya*] and your natural impulses [*ṭibāʿ*] through constant fasting [*ṣawm*], constant prayer [*ṣalāt*] and constant patience [*ṣabr*]. When the servant has truly accomplished the dissolution of his lower self, his passions and his natural impulses, he survives with his Patron [*Mawlā*], free from the pressure of the crowd. He survives as heart and innermost being and protégé [*mawlā*], as ease without discomfort, as good health without sickness. Be sensible! Learn, practice and be sincere.

O young man! You must learn from creatures, then from the Creator. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

When someone puts into practice what he knows, Allāh endows him with knowledge of what he never knew.

It is necessary first of all to learn from creatures, to acquire the elements of wisdom [*ḥikam*], then secondly from the Creator, to acquire esoteric knowledge [*ʿilm ladunī*], a knowledge that is specially relevant to our hearts, a secret [*sirr*] that is specially relevant to our innermost beings [*asrār*]. But how can you study something without a master [*ustādh*]? You are in the domain of wisdom [*dār al-ḥikma*]. You must seek knowledge [*ʿilm*], for to seek it is a compulsory religious duty [*farīḍa*]. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Seek knowledge, even in China!

O young man! You must keep company with those who will support you in the struggle with your lower self, not with those who will support it against you. If you keep company with an ignorant, hypocritical Shaikh, one who is motivated by natural impulse and passion, he will be supportive of the self against you. The company of the Shaikhs should not be sought for worldly purposes, but for the sake of the hereafter. If a Shaikh is motivated by natural impulse and passion, his friendship has only worldly value. If he is a man of heart [*ṣāhib qalb*], his friendship is for the sake of the hereafter, and if he is a man of innermost being [*ṣāhib sirr*], his friendship is for the sake of the Master [*Mawlā*].

O you who pose as a Shaikh and a leader, trying to match the genuine Shaikhs in their spiritual states [*aḥwāl*]! As long as you go on pursuing this world with your lower self and your desires, you are no more than a boy! This is mere natural inclination [*ṭabʿ*]. It is very rare indeed for the self to shun this world and renounce it voluntarily, not under compulsion, or for the self to be so tranquil that it becomes a heart. Rarest of the rare! Unlikeliest of the unlikely! This can really happen to it only when it is blind to this world and the hereafter, and to everything apart from the Master.

The nearer the servant gets to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), the greater his peril and the more intense his fear. This is why the person who is most in danger from the king is his chief minister [*wazīr*], because he is the closest to him. The believer cannot attain to Him except through sincerity [*ikhlās*]. He is therefore in a risky situation. The people [of the Lord] are in dire peril; their fear does not subside until they meet their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). When a person really knows [*ʿarafa*] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), his fear becomes intense. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

I am the one among you who knows Allāh best, and the one among you who fears him most intensely.

The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) puts His saints [*awliyāʾ*] to the test in order to purify them, so they are always in a state of fearing change and transformation. They are fearful even though their condition is one of safety. They feel uneasy, despite the fact that they have been given reassurance. They criticize themselves because of

the tiniest detail [“a speck and a mustard seed”], a random glance or the slightest absence of mind. As often as He calms them down, they fly into a panic. As often as He makes them rich, they become poor again. As often as He reassures them, they become afraid. As often as He makes things possible for them, they find something impossible. As often as He makes them laugh, they cry. As often as He makes them happy, they turn sad. They dread the vicissitudes of fate [*taqallub al-aghyār*] and a bad outcome, for they know that their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)

shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned.
(21:23)

As for you, O heedless one, you challenge the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) with disobedience and contradiction, then you rely on His safekeeping. Soon your sense of security will turn into fear, your comfort into hardship, your good health into sickness, your dignity into humiliation, your elevated status into degradation, and your wealth into poverty. You should know that your safety from the chastisement of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) on the Day of Resurrection will be in proportion to your fear of Him in this world, while your fear in the hereafter will be in proportion to your sense of security in this world. But you are all immersed in the ocean of this world, dwelling at the bottom of the well of heedless folly, so it is no wonder that your way of life is like that of the animals. You are familiar with nothing apart from eating, drinking, sexual intercourse and sleep. Your spiritual states are apparent to the masters of hearts [*arbāb al-qulūb*]. Greed for this world, for the accumulation of its goods and the pursuit of possessions, has kept you away from the path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and from His door.

O you whom greed has disgraced, even if you conspired with all the people on earth in order to procure for yourself something not allotted to you, you would not be able to obtain it. So give up greediness in the pursuit of what has been allotted to you, and in the pursuit of what has not been allotted to you. How can a sensible person regard it as worth his while to waste his time on a foregone conclusion?

You must expel creatures from your heart and pay no attention to them in matters of injury and benefit, giving and withholding, praise

and blame, honor and insult, ups and downs. You must firmly believe that harm and benefit are from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and that good and evil are in His hand, channeled by Him through the hands of creatures. Then, when you are fully convinced, you will come to be an ambassador between creatures and the Creator, taking them by the hand toward His door. You will see them as being deficient in relation to you. You will view those who are disobedient to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in terms of insanity and ignorance, so you will handle them gently, giving them medical treatment and putting up patiently with their annoying and ignorant behavior.

Those who are obedient to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) are the learned and the intelligent ones, while those who are disobedient to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) are the ignorant and the insane. The disobedient sinner is ignorant of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he disobeys Him and follows his devil [*shaitān*], with whose wishes he complies. If he were not so ignorant, he would not disobey. If he really knew [*ʿarafa*] his lower self [*nafs*], and realized that it incites him to evil, he would not yield to its demands.

How often do I warn you about Iblīs and his assistants? Yet you befriend him and accept instruction from him. His assistants are the lower self, this world, the passions, natural impulses and bad companions. Beware of them all, for all of them are your enemies. You have no loving friend [*muḥibb*] apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for He wants you for your sake, while everyone else wants you for his own sake. When you lose your own self in your state of seclusion [*khalwa*], and seek it together with the seekers, then does your seclusion become an intimate friendship [*uns*] with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you leave your lower self with this world, your heart with the hereafter, and your innermost being [*sirr*] with the Master [*Mawlā*], then does your seclusion become an intimate friendship with Allāh. As for the situation where your own self is present, and other selves are also present, here you have no seclusion. Seclusion with Him is possible only in isolation from all others. You can only find Him after hating all others.

When will you be pure enough to recognize purity [*ṣafāʾ*] and its people? When will you be honest enough to recognize honesty [*ṣidq*]

and its people? When will you be sincere enough to recognize the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and its people? When you rectify your spiritual condition, you will recognize the men of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you see the door of the King, you will see His servants standing there. You have not trodden the steps to the King's door. You have not even noticed it, so how can you see its attendants? There is nothing to talk about until you see the door, for only then will you see the attendants. There is nothing to be said until you see Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for at that point you will truly see. There you will recognize truthfulness, which lifts you up, carries you forward and keeps you awake, whereas falsehood sets you back and puts you to sleep.

You must be with the truthful [*ṣādiqūn*] in order to be treated as they are treated. Be truthful in all that you say and do, and be patient under all circumstances. Truthfulness [*ṣidq*] means affirming the Divine Unity [*tawḥīd*], being sincere [*ikhhlās*] and having total trust [*tawakkul*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The reality [*ḥaqīqa*] of total trust is detachment from material means [*asbāb*] and influential people [*arbāb*], and the abandonment of your own power and strength as far as your heart and innermost being [*sirr*] are concerned. If you wish to be connected with Him, you must break off all other connections and turn away from you and from them. You must turn away from the product [*muḥdath*] in order to reach the Producer [*Muḥdith*]. As long as you stay with you and with them, you cannot succeed. The nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) does not tolerate overcrowding.

Barely one in a million of you can understand what I am saying and put it into practice. The rest of you enter into the flow of it and enjoy being present to participate. I wish all of you well in this world and the hereafter. This world is the believer's prison, so when he forgets his prison he obtains a feeling of release. The believers [*mu'minūn*] are in a state of imprisonment, while the knowers [*ʿārifūn*] are in a state of intoxication, so they are out of the prison. Their Lord let them drink the wine of longing [*shawq*] for Him, the wine of intimate friendship [*uns*] with Him, the wine of the quest for Him, the wine of forgetting creatures and waking up to Him. He gave them these wines to drink, so they lost consciousness [*tabannajū*] of creatures and woke up to Him

and in His company. They are out of the prison and away from the prisoners. They have been allowed to experience their Fire [of Hell] and their Paradise in advance, here in this world. Contention is their Fire, and cheerful acceptance of the judgment [of the Lord] is their Paradise. Heedlessness is their Fire, and vigilant awareness [*yaqaza*] is their Paradise. In the case of ordinary people [*awāmm*], the Resurrection [*al-qiyaama*] is a reckoning [*muḥāsaba*], but in the case of the élite [*khawāṣṣ*] it is a reprimand [*mu'ātaba*]. How could it be otherwise for them, since they have experienced their personal resurrection while still in this world? They have wept in advance of the beating, so their weeping will stand them in good stead when the time for the beating has arrived.

Sufyān ath-Thawrī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) appeared in someone's dream, so he was asked: "What has Allāh done with you?" He replied: "He made me stand before Him and He said to me: 'O Sufyān, did you not know that I am All-Forgiving [*Ghafūr*], All-Compassionate [*Raḥīm*] ? You did all that weeping from fear of Me. Did you not feel embarrassed in front of Me?'"

You must part company with your natural impulses [*ṭab'*], your passions [*hawā*] and your devil [*shaitān*], and have no confidence in them. Once this has been firmly established, you must put an enmity in place between you and bad companions. You must not relate to them in a friendly way until they harmonize with you in your spiritual state. Repentance is a coup d'état [*qalb dawla*]. If a person repents, but does not change the condition he was in before repenting, he is being dishonest about his repentance. If you bring about change, change will be brought about for you. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh does not change what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves. (13:11)

You must do no wrong to anyone in this world, for it will be held against you in the hereafter. Act justly [*i'dil*] in this world, so that He will not cause you to deviate [*ya'dila bika*] from the path to Paradise. Since tyrants abandon justice [*adl*], He causes them to stray [*adala bihim*] from the path to the abode of the people of justice. You must leave everything in its proper place, so there will be a place for you in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

This is the end of the age. I would like to see you already changed and transformed, for I am afraid on your behalf of change and transformation. Of course there must be that which changes and transforms things, but part of the process is kept secret. O creatures of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), I seek your welfare and your best interests in general. I wish for the closing of the gates of the Fire [of Hell], for it to cease to exist altogether, and that not one of the creatures of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) may enter it. I wish for the opening [*fath*] of the gates of Paradise, and that not one of the creatures of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) may be prevented from entering it. I wish these wishes because of my awareness of the mercy [*rahma*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His compassion [*shafaqa*] for His creatures.

My commitment is to the welfare of your hearts and their refinement, not to the modification and refinement of speech. Do not be put off by the roughness of my speech, for I got all my training in the religion [*dīn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) from rough men. My speech is rough and my food is rough, so anyone who runs away from me and the likes of me will not succeed. When you are badly behaved in matters of religion, I do not abandon you, and I am not saying I shall do so. I do not mind whether you are present with me or whether you are absent. I seek ways and means only from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not from you. I am outside of your calculation and your reckoning. What I am involved in does not bring about change through the tongue, but only through the inner core [*janān*]. No right, no left and no behind, but only straight ahead. A front without a back. As a follower of the Prophets [*anbiyā'*], the Messengers [*mursalīn*] and our predecessors [*salaf*], I never part company with them in running a total course to the abode of His nearness.

You must repent your sins and your bad behavior. This repentance is my plant in the ground of your hearts; a building I shall build with you. I shall demolish Satan's building and build the building of the All-Merciful [*ar-Rahmān*]. I shall connect you with your Master and your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). I am dealing with the kernel, not with the shell. This outer [*ẓāhir*] is a shell, which I do not bother to train. I train only your kernels [*albāb*], and I set your shells aside. I shall train you until the eye of your Prophet finds you a soothing sight.

O young men! Do not keep company with me for worldly purposes. You should befriend me only for the sake of the hereafter. When your friendship with me is genuinely for the sake of the hereafter, this world will come your way as an automatic consequence. You will thus receive it in proportion to your abstinence [*zuhd*] from it, while I can guarantee you that you will not be held accountable for it. You must give priority to the hereafter over this world, to the inner [*bāṭin*] over the outer [*ẓāhir*], to truth [*ḥaqq*] over falsehood [*bāṭil*], to the permanent [*bāqī*] over the transitory [*fānī*]. Give up, then take. Give up taking from the hands of natural impulse [*tabʿ*], passion [*tabʿ*] and the lower self [*nafs*], and take from the hand of the heart and the innermost being [*sirr*]. Give up taking from the hands of creatures, and take from the hand of the Creator. Obey the Messenger [*rasūl*] and accept from him whatever he may bring you in the way of commandments and prohibitions. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. Whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. And keep your duty to Allāh. (59:7)

You must be lions upon receipt of the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), invalids upon receipt of His prohibition, and lifeless on the arrival of the judgments [*aqdiyya*] and decrees of destiny [*aqdār*]. And all the while you must relate to people socially on a basis of high moral standards. Do not petition Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for anything other than His foreknowledge about you, and yield to Him in compliance with His decision [*ḥukm*] and His decree [*qadar*] where you and others are concerned. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

When Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) created the Pen, He said to it: "Write!" It said: "What shall I write?" He said: "Write down My decision concerning My creation up to the Day of Resurrection."

O you who are dead at heart! O you who are alive in your lower selves! Your hearts have died, so you must cope with their disaster as well as you would cope with one affecting someone else. The death of hearts is heedless neglect of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and of His remembrance [*dhikr*], so if anyone among you wishes to revive his heart, let him keep within it remembrance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), intimate friendship with Him, and contemplation of His might, His majesty and His way of dealing with His creatures.

O young man! You must remember the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), first with your heart [*qalb*], then secondly with your outer form [*qālab*]. Remember Him a thousand times with your heart and once with your tongue. On the advent of misfortunes, remember Him with patience; on the advent of this world, with renunciation; on the advent of the hereafter, with acceptance; on the advent of the Lord of Truth, with affirmation of His Oneness [*tawḥīd*]; and on the advent of anything else whatsoever, with rejection. If you slacken the reins of your lower self, it will bolt with you and throw you. You must control it with the bridle of pious restraint [*waraʿ*] and give up tittle-tattle [*qāl wa-qīl*]. Remembering death will purify your heart and make you hate this world and creatures. The veil will be lifted from your heart, so you will see that creatures are transitory, lifeless, perishable, feeble, containing neither harm nor benefit.

Fiftieth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 18th of Sha‘bān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

Concentrate on correcting yourself. Give up idle gossip and the craziness of this world. Rid yourself of its cares as far as you can. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) used to say:

Rid yourselves of the cares of this world as far as you can.

O you who are so ignorant of this world, if you really knew it you would not go looking for it. If it comes toward you, it gives you trouble, and if it turns away it leaves you in distress. If you really knew [*‘arafa*ta] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you would know all the rest through Him, but you are ignorant of Him, His Messengers [*rusul*], His Prophets [*anbiyā’*] and His saints [*awliyā’*].

Woe unto you! Can you not learn a lesson from those who have gone before, and their experience of this world? You must seek deliverance [*khalās*] from it. Cast off its clothing and run away from it. Cast off the clothing of the lower self [*nafs*], and travel to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you are divested of the lower self, you are divested of everything apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Since everything apart from Him attaches to the lower self, you must turn away from your own lower self, then you may see your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Submit [*sallim*] to Him and you will be safe [*salimta*]. Strive in His cause and you will be guided aright. Give thanks to Him and He will add more unto you. Submit you and creatures to Him. Do not resist Him, whether on your own behalf or on behalf of other people.

The people [of the Lord] have no wish besides their wish for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and they have no preference besides

their preference for Him. They are not greedy in pursuit of their own allotted shares [*aqsām*], nor do they covet the shares allotted to others. If you wish to enjoy the companionship of the people [of the Lord] in this world and the hereafter, you must yield to Him in compliance with His words, His workings [*af'āl*] and His will [*irāda*]. But I see that you have taken the opposite approach, and have made it your regular habit to contradict Him and challenge Him by night and by day. He says to you: “Do!” and you do not do, as if He were the servant [*‘abd*] and you the one to be served [*ma‘būd*]. Glory be to Him [*subhānahu*! How much He tolerates! Were it not for His tolerance [*hilm*], you would experience the opposite of what you have now.

If you wish for success [*falāḥ*], you must practice quietness in His presence—quietness of the outer [*ẓāhir*] and also of the inner [*bāṭin*]. Asking constitutes bad manners in my opinion, and I consider it acceptable only as a special concession [*rukḥṣa*]. You must carry out His commandment, observe His prohibition, comply with His decree, and keep your outer and your inner calmly speechless in His presence, then you will experience what is good in this world and the hereafter. Do not ask creatures for anything, for they are weak and poor, incapable of bringing harm or benefit to themselves or anyone else. Be patient with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not try to make Him hurry things up or hold them back. Harbor no doubts about Him, for He is More Compassionate [*Ashfaq*] toward you than you are [*‘alaikum minkum*—than you are to you [*minka ‘alaika*]. This is why one of the wise said: “What is more to me than I am [*aish ‘alayya minnī*]?” You must practice conformity to Him (Almighty and Glorious is He), for He knows you better than you do [*Huwa A‘lamu minkum bikum*]. He does not make you aware of everything in which there is some benefit. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

But it may happen that you hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing which is bad for you. Allāh knows and you know not. (2:216).

He has also said:

And He creates that which you do not know. (16:8)

And then He has said:

And of knowledge you have been given only a little (17:85)

If someone wishes to set out along the path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), he must correct his own lower self [*nafs*] before he embarks on the journey. The self is badly behaved, because it is “always inciting to evil [*ammāra bi’s-sū’*]” (12:53). What would it do in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? How can it accompany you on your journey toward Him? You must struggle with it until it becomes tame, then, once it is tame, take it along with you to His door. You must not harmonize with it before giving it training and instruction, teaching it to be well behaved and to have confidence in the promise [*wa’d*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His threat [*wa’id*]. It is blind, dumb, deaf, confused, ignorant of its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and an enemy to Him. But through unrelenting efforts its eyes will be opened, its tongue will be loosened, its ear will begin to hear, and it will be rid of its confusion, its ignorance and its hostility to its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). This calls for muscles and manpower [*hibāl wa-rijāl*], and for perseverance hour after hour, day after day, year after year. This does not come about through the effort of just one hour, one month or one year. You must beat it with the whip of hunger, deprive it of its luxury and give it all that it really deserves. Attack it aggressively, and do not be afraid of its sword and its knife. Its sword is wood, not iron. It has words with no actions, lies with no honesty, commitment with no fulfillment. It has no love [*mawadda*]. A retreat with no counter-attack [*jawla bi-lā dawla*]. Iblīs, who is its commander, has no stamina in his hostility and opposition when faced with sincere believers [*mu’minūn ṣādiqūn*], so how can it have any? You must not imagine that he entered Paradise and evicted Adam (peace be upon him) from it with his own strength, when it was actually the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) who empowered him to do that, making him a means [*sabab*] and not a cause [*as’l*].

O you of little understanding, do not flee from the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) because of some trial with which He afflicts you, for He is More Aware [*A’raf*] of your best interest than you are. He would not put you to the test except for some good reason and wisdom. When He tests you, therefore, you must be steadfast, review your sins, do a lot of seeking forgiveness [*istighfār*] and repenting

[*tawba*], and beg Him to grant you the patience and perseverance to see it through. You must stand before Him and cling to the hem of His mercy, as you beg Him to remove the affliction from you and to demonstrate the beneficial aspect of it.

If you wish for success [*ḥalāl*], you must make friends with a Shaikh who is learned in the rules [*ḥukm*] and knowledge [*ʿilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), one who can teach you, educate you and acquaint you with the path to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The seeker [*murīd*] cannot do without a leader [*qāʿid*] and guide [*ḍalīl*], for he is in a desert where there are scorpions, snakes, perils, thirst, and savage beasts. He therefore needs someone to warn him of these dangers and guide him to the oasis of water and fruit-bearing trees. If left to himself without a guide, he would stumble into a wild terrain, a rugged area abounding in lions, scorpions, snakes and all kinds of peril.

O traveler on the path of this world, you must not get separated from the caravan, the guide and your fellow travelers, otherwise you will lose your property and your breath of life [*rūḥ*]. As for you, O traveler on the path of the hereafter, you must be together with the guide until he leads you to the camp site [*manzil*]. You must serve him along the way, be on your best behavior with him, and never leave his sight. He will teach you and draw you close to him, then he will delegate responsibility to you as his lieutenant on the path, as he comes to recognize your nobility, your honesty and your skillfulness. Thus you will become a commander [*amīr*] on the path, and an authority [*sultān*] in charge of its people. He will make you his deputy in charge of his retinue of escorts, and you will continue to hold this position until he brings you to your Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). He will deliver you safely to him, and he will be delighted to see you. Then he will delegate responsibility to you for hearts and spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] and inner contents [*maʿānī*], so you will come to be an ambassador between Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His creatures, an errand boy [*ghulām*] in the service of your Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace), running time after time to creatures and Creator.

This is not something that comes about in a vacuum and through wishful thinking, but through something that becomes established within the breast, and which is verified in action. The people [of the

Lord] are the odd ones out [*nuzzā' al-‘ashā'ir*]; they are fewer than one in a million. They hear the word of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with their hearts and their inner contents [*ma'ānī*], and they confirm the truth of what they hear through the actions of their physical bodies.

O ignorant ones, repent to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), return to the highway of the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*] and follow them in all that they say and do. You must not follow the side roads with the hypocrites who are seeking this world, turning away from the hereafter, abandoning the highway [*jādda*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), which was the road taken by our predecessors. They turn to right or left or backwards, seeking the lazy folk's path, but the way they take does not lead them through to the genuine highway, which is the path to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O young man! You may have social relations with these folk in this world, for worldly purposes, but tomorrow you will not see them; you will be separated from them. How could you not be separated from your bad companions, your relations with whom have not been for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Since you will inevitably have social relations with creatures, develop them with the pious and the abstinent, those who have real knowledge and put it into practice, those who seek the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and those who are sought by Him. Cultivate those who will take creatures from you and give you the nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He); those who will take error from you and set you upon the highway; those who will blindfold your eyes against this world, then open them to the hereafter; those who will remove the tray of this world from in front of you, and replace it with the tray of the hereafter; those who will relieve you of having to go barefoot, and give you socks to wear instead; those who will lift you out from the midst of snakes and scorpions and lions, and set you down in a place that is safe, comfortable and pleasant. Associate with people of this caliber, listen patiently to what they have to say, and accept what they tell you to do or not to do, then you will soon experience good results, although the span of courage [*shajā'a*] is an hour's patience [*ṣabr*].

Nothing can come about because of you, yet you must play your part. You must buy a laborer's tools and a basket made of palm-leaves, then sit at the gate of employment. If your working is preordained, you will have work to do. Give the material means [*sabab*] its due, have trust [*tawakkal*], and sit at the gate of employment. If they take casual laborers, but do not take you, you must not budge from your spot until you despair of having anyone invite you to work for him. At this point, you must throw yourself into the ocean of total trust [*tawakkul*], so that you link the means [*sabab*] with the Cause [*Musabbib*].

You must be well behaved in the presence of your teacher, and let your silence be more frequent than your speaking out, for this will be conducive to your learning and your being close to his heart. Good behavior will bring you near, while bad manners will keep you at a distance. But how can your manners improve, when you do not mix with people of refinement [*udabā'*]? How can you learn, when you are not satisfied with your teacher and do not have a good opinion of him?

Fifty-first Discourse

On the 20th of Sha‘bān, A.H. 545, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

This world is all about wisdom [*ḥikma*] and work [*‘amal*]. The hereafter is all about power [*qudra*]. The former is based on [divine] Wisdom, while the latter is based on [divine] Power, so do not give up work in the domain of wisdom, and do not underestimate His Power in the domain of power. You must work in the domain of wisdom in accordance with His Wisdom, and not depend upon His Power. Do not make destiny [*qadar*] an excuse for your lower self [*nafs*], for it will try to use it as a pretext and give up work. Laying the blame on destiny is the pretext of the lazy. Destiny can only count as an excuse outside the sphere of the [divine] commandments and prohibitions.

After some discussion, the Shaikh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) went on to say:

The believer does not rely on this world, nor on what it contains. He takes from it his allotted share [*qism*] and turns away with his heart toward the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). There he stays until He relieves him of the fierce heat of this world and instructs his heart to enter His presence through the mediation of his innermost being [*sirr*], sending the innermost being out to the heart, and the heart to the tranquil self [*an-nafs al-muṭma‘inna*] and the obedient limbs and organs of the physical body. Then while he is like this, lo and behold, his dependants are enabled to manage without him, and a separation comes between him and them. His Lord protects him from the evils of creatures and makes them subservient to him. He sets a barrier between his heart and their hearts, and he remains all alone with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). It is as if creatures had never been created, as far as he is concerned; as if his Lord (Almighty and Glorious

is He) had no creatures apart from him. His Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) continues to be active [*fā'il*], while he is acted upon [*maf'ul fih*]; He continues to be the object of his quest, while he is His seeker; He continues to be his root, while he is His branch. None but Him does he know, and none but Him does he see. His Lord hides him away from creatures:

Then, when He wills, He resurrects him. (80:22)

He resurrects him for their benefit, causing him to exist among them for their welfare and guidance, and he endures their trouble for the sake of the good pleasure of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The people [of the Lord] are the guardians of hearts and innermost beings [*asrār*], standing with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and with none but Him, working for Him and for none but Him. O hypocrite, you do not have a clue about these people, nor do you have a clue about faith [*īmān*], nor a clue about intimate friendship [*uns*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Soon you must die, and you will be sorry after death. You have been satisfied to speak eloquently with the tongue and incoherently with the inner core [*janān*], and this will not stand you in good stead. Eloquence belongs to the heart, not to the tongue. Weep a thousand times for yourself, and for others but once. O you who are dead at heart! O you who are absent from the people [of the Lord]! O backslider! O you who are screened by you and by creatures from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)!

My God [*Ilāhī*], I was mute and You made me speak, so bring benefit to creatures through my speech, and perfect their righteousness [*ṣalāh*] at my hand, or else return me to the state of muteness!

O my people! I summon you to violent death [*al-mawt al-aḥmar*],* that is to say, to combat with the lower self [*nafs*], the passions [*hawā*], the natural impulses [*tab'*] and the devil [*shaitān*], to the abandonment of creatures, and to the renunciation of everything whatsoever apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do battle [*jāhidū*] on these terms and do not despair, for as the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has told us:

Every day He is about some awesome business. (55:29)

Ask of Him in accordance with His power [*qudra*]. Ask of Him with regard to Power, not with regard to Wisdom [*hikma*]. Ask of Him in terms of His knowledge [*ilm*], not in terms of your knowledge. Ask of

*Lit., "red death"—as opposed to "white death" [*al-mawt al-abyaḍ*], meaning death by natural causes.

Him with your hearts and your innermost beings [*asrār*], not with the babbling of the tongue. Ask of Him beyond the scope of your knowledge and your power. Stand in His presence in a state of bankruptcy [*iflās*] in relation to all things. Do not try to outmaneuver Him. Do not try to outdo him. Do not try to outwit Him. Do not make fools of yourselves by rejecting His management [*tadbīr*] in favor of your own management. Anyone who does not put his knowledge into practice is an ignorant fool, even if he has memorized it perfectly and knows it inside out. The acquisition of knowledge without practice will throw you back on creatures, while putting your knowledge into practice will restore you to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). It will make you abstain from this world and let you perceive with your inner [*bāṭin*]. It will shift your focus away from the improvement of the outer [*ẓāhir*], and inspire you [*yulhimuka*] with the improvement of the inner, and at this stage the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will befriend you, because you will now be worthy of Him. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And He befriends the righteous. (7:196)

He befriends them outwardly and inwardly [*ẓawāhirahum wa-bawāṭinahum*]. He trains them outwardly with the hand of His wisdom, and inwardly with the hand of His knowledge [*‘ilm*], so they fear none but Him and pin their hopes on none but Him. They take only from Him and give only in His cause. They become estranged from all others, enjoy His intimate companionship and feel at home with Him.

These are the latter days [*ākhir az-zamān*], a time of much change and transformation. This is the age of indifference [*fatra*], the age of hypocrisy [*nifāq*] and its general circulation [*naḥāq*]. O hypocrite, you are the slave of this world and of creatures. You put on a show for them and work to please them, but you forget that you are under the supervision of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You make a display of working for the sake of the hereafter, when all your work and aspirations are actually for this world. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

If a servant [*‘abd*] puts on a fine show of working for the hereafter, although he does not wish for it and is not seeking to attain it, he will be cursed in the heavens by his personal name [*ism*] and his patronymics [*nasab*].

I recognize you, O hypocrites, by means of wisdom [*hikam*] and knowledge [*ilm*], but I shall veil you with the veil of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Woe unto you! Have you no sense of shame? Your physical bodies have not been cleansed of external sins and impurities. You lay claim to purity of the inner. Purity of the heart has not been realized, so what of the innermost being [*sirr*]? You do not behave properly with the created [*makhluq*], yet you lay claim to proper behavior [*adab*] with the Creator [*Khāliq*]. The teacher is not satisfied with you. You have not behaved properly with him and have not accepted his instructions. You sit in the seat of honor and push yourself to the fore.

There is nothing to be said until your affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawhīd*] stands erect and steady in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), until you hatch from the egg of your existence [*wujūd*], sit in the lap of grace, come under the wing of His intimate friendship [*uns*], peck the seed of sincerity [*ikhlas*] and drink the water of direct experience [*mushāhada*]. Then you will remain in this state until you become a rooster [*dik*]. At this point you will become a guardian for the hens, loving them with selfless devotion, and a muezzin [*mu'adhdhin*] who arouses people from sleep by night and by day, alerting them to the obedient service of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O ignorant one, put down the catalogue [*daftar*] and come, sit over here, right in front of me. Knowledge is obtained from the mouths of the men [of the Lord], not from the archives [*dafātir*]. It is obtained from the spiritual state [*hāl*], not from the teaching [*maqāl*]. It is obtained from those who are extinct [*fānūn*] to themselves and to creatures, surviving [*bāqūn*] in the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The central point is your becoming extinct [*fanā'*] to you and to them, then your existence [*wujūd*] in Him. You must die to everything other than Him, then come alive through Him and for His sake. Keep company with the servants of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), who never leave His door. Their job is to carry out His commandments, observe His prohibitions and comply with His decree [*qadar*]. They move about in harmony with His will [*irāda*] for them and His action [*fi'l*] on them. They have no quarrel with Him where they are concerned, and none where others are concerned. They do not oppose Him in anything, be it little or much, be it high or low.

You must not be distracted from the service of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) by the service of your own lower self [*nafs*], by the greedy desire to achieve its personal ambitions. The saints [*awliyā'*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) must go through the motions of seeking from creatures, not because they have any need of them, but because He inspires [*yulhimu*] them to do so, as a mercy [*raḥma*] to His creatures. Such a person does not seek anything from them because of his own self. His own self has become tame and no longer has any will or desire [*shahwa*] in relation to this world. You suppose that his own self is like your ignorant self, which has made you devoted to its service and which makes you act according to its will and its desires. If you had any sense, you would not get involved in its service and distracted from the service of its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), for it is an enemy to you. The right course for you is to respond to it with silence, and to throw what it says overboard. You should listen to it as you would listen to a madman [*majnūn*] who has lost his mind. Pay no attention to its words and its demands for the satisfaction of carnal desires and pleasures and vanities. Your destruction and its destruction lie in your heeding it, and your well-being [*ṣalāh*] and its well-being lie in your contradicting it. If the self [*nafs*] is obedient to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), its sustenance [*rizq*] will come to it in plenty from everywhere, but if it is disobedient and throws its weight around, it will have its material means [*asbāb*] cut off and troubles will overwhelm it. Thus it will perish, losing both this world and the hereafter.

As for the self that is obedient and contented, its owner is served whichever way he may turn. He collects his allotted share with a feeling of satisfaction. He discharges the religious duties [*farḍ*] that are incumbent upon him, with a willing heart, with no sense of inconvenience. His heart is empty of everything apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), while his physical body is free from strain in the process of obtaining this world and its bounties. O recipient of blessings, give thanks for those blessings, otherwise they will be snatched from your hand. Clip the wing of blessings with gratitude, otherwise they will fly away from you. Dead is he who dies to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), even if he be alive in this world. What good can his

life do him, when he is spending it on the satisfaction of his lusts and pleasures and vanities? For he is dead in inner content [*ma' nā*] if not in outer form [*ṣūra*].

O Allāh, make us alive in You and make us dead to everything other than You!

O you who are an elder in age but only a boy in natural inclination, how long will it take you to outgrow your youthful immaturity? Your natural disposition follows the perversity of this world, which is all you are interested in. Do you not realize that your interest [*hammuka*] is what causes you anxiety [*ahammaka*], and that you are the slave of anyone who holds your reins? If your reins are held by this world, then you are a slave to it. If your reins are held by the hereafter, then you are a slave to it. If your reins are held by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you are a slave to Him. If your reins are held by your lower self [*nafs*], then you are the slave of your own lower self. If your reins are held by your passions [*hawā*], then you are the slave of your passions. If your reins are held by creatures, then you are the slave of creatures. So notice to whom you are giving control of your reins!

Most of you, the great majority, are those who wish for this world. The minority are those of you who wish for the hereafter. The exceptional few among you are those who wish for the countenance of the Lord of this world and the hereafter. In their company you must be well behaved. You must not contradict them and quarrel with them. Do not disparage them, for you will be disparaged. Do not behave badly toward them, for you will be destroyed.

Be sensible! You are showing yourselves hostile to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) through your actions. You mean less to Him than a mosquito's wing, unless you are sincerely devoted to Him in your private lives and under all circumstances. The treasure that never passes away is honesty [*sidq*], sincerity [*ikhlāṣ*], the fear of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and hope placed in Him, and recourse to Him in all situations. You must have faith [*īmān*], for it will connect you.

When you see one of them [the people of the Lord], lower your wing to him [in humility]. Submit your condition to him and do not argue with him about it. Hold your tongue and do not offend him with your bad behavior. Silence about what you do not know is a form of

knowledge [*‘ilm*], and submission [*taslīm*] in what you do not know is a form of Islām. O you who are weak in conviction, you lack both this world and the hereafter, and this is because of your bad behavior toward the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and your doubts about His saints [*awliyā’*] and the deputies [*abdāl*] of His Prophets [*anbiyā’*], whom the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has appointed in their stead. He has charged them with the task with which he charged the Prophets [*nabiyyūn*] and the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*]. He has committed to them their works [*a’ māl*] and their forms of knowledge [*‘ulūm*]. He has made them extinct to their lower selves [*nufūs*] and their passions [*ahwiya*], and then brought them into existence through Him and established them in His presence. He has purified their hearts of everything apart from Him, and has put this world, the hereafter and creatures at their disposal. He has shown them His power [*qudra*] and taught them His wisdom [*hikam*] and His knowledge [*‘ilm*]. He has given them strength through Him. Real to them is the saying: “There is no power or strength except through Allāh, the High, the Almighty.” They are sincere in saying this, for they have annihilated their own power and strengths, and the strengths of creatures, and have grasped the strength of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Mu’ādh (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) used to say: “O Allāh, if You will not do with me what I would wish, then give me patience to bear what You wish!”

O young man! Cheerful acceptance of the [divine] judgment is better than gaining this world in the midst of conflict. Its sweetness is sweeter to the hearts of the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*] than the satisfaction of carnal desires and pleasures. It is sweeter to them than the whole of this world and all it contains, because it makes life altogether delightful in all its conditions of various kinds.

You must speak about people with the tongue of knowledge, practice and sincerity. Do not speak about them with the tongue of knowledge without practice, for this will benefit neither you nor those around you. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Knowledge calls out to practice, and if the latter responds [well and good]; otherwise it departs.

Its blessedness [*baraka*] departs, and its case against you remains to be answered. You become a scholar seduced by his knowledge. Its tree stays with you, but you lose its fruit.

You must beg Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to grant you a state [*ḥāl*] and a station [*maqām*] in His presence, then if He grants you this, beg Him to keep it a secret and not let you feel like disclosing any part of it. If you like to make public what is between you and the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), it will be for you a cause of your destruction. Beware of taking pride in states [*aḥwāl*] and works [*a' māl*], for it is a provocation causing the person guilty of it to lose the favor of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Beware of a fondness for talking about creatures and winning their acceptance, for this will do you more harm than good.

Do not utter a single word until you put your own affairs in order and a definite instruction comes to you from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). How can you invite people to your home without having prepared any food for them? This is a business that needs a foundation; only then can there be a building. You must dig the ground of your heart until the water of wisdom [*ḥikma*] wells up in it, then build with sincerity [*ikhlaṣ*], struggles [*mujāhadāt*] and righteous works [*a' māl ṣāliḥāt*], until your castle is erected. Then invite people to it after this has been done.

O Allāh, enliven the bodies of our deeds with the spirit [*rūḥ*] of sincere devotion to You!

What benefit can you derive from seclusion from creatures, when you have creatures within your heart? None; and no honor is due to you or to your seclusion [*khalwa*]. If you practice seclusion while there are creatures within your heart, then you are sitting all alone without the presence of the intimate companionship [*uns*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Or rather, your companions are the lower self [*nafs*], the devil [*shaiṭān*] and the passions. When your heart enjoys the intimate friendship of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you are secluded from creatures even if you are in the midst of your family and your kinsfolk. Once this intimacy is firmly established in your heart, He will demolish the walls of your existence [*wujūd*] and give insight to your

perception, so that you can recognize His gracious favor and His action [fi'l]. Thus you will be content with Him to the exclusion of everything but Him.

When someone is in a particular spiritual state [*hāla mina'l-aḥwāl*], while at the same time keeping to the sacred law [*shar'*], and desires neither what is above it nor what is below it, neither that it should pass away nor that it should be permanent, then he has met the precondition of contentment [*riḍā*], compliance [*muwāfaqa*] and servitude [*'ubūdiyya*]. Woe unto you! Do not tell a lie! You lay claim to contentment, yet you can be put out by a flea, a crumb, a word or an insult. Do not tell a lie! I will not listen to your lies. I will not act upon them, nor will I give them credence.

Among all creatures there are a few individuals whose hearts receive inspired revelation [*yūḥā ilā qulūbihim*]. Words meant specially for them are cast into their hearts. They recognize what is good and stand by it. How could it not be so, since they are following the example of the Messenger in his sayings? He (blessings and peace be upon him) received inspired revelation outwardly [*ẓāhiran*], while they receive it inwardly [*bāṭinan*] in their hearts, because they are his heirs [*wurrāth*] and his followers in all that he has commanded them to do. If you genuinely wish to be such a follower, you must frequently remember death, for the recollection of it will support you against your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*] and your devil [*shaitān*], and help you to get rid of your attachment to your worldly interests. If someone will not take a lesson from death, there is no way to preach him a lesson. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Death is sufficient as a preacher [*wā'iz*].

Your allotted share will come to you, whether you are prepared to do without it or have a craving for it. If you are prepared to do without it, your allotted share will come to you and you will be worthy of respect. It will also come to you if you have a craving for it, but then you will not be worthy of respect. The hypocrite [*munāfiq*] shows modesty toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) as long as creatures are present around him, but behaves impudently toward Him when he is in his private space.

Woe unto you! If your faith [*īmān*] in Him were genuine, as well as your firm belief [*i' tiqād*] that He is Watching [*Nāẓir*] you, Near [*Qarīb*] to you, Supervising [*Raqīb*] you, you would feel a sense of shame in His presence. I am telling you the truth [*ḥaqq*], and I neither fear you nor pin my hopes upon you. In my sight you and all the people of this earth are like fleas, like specks of dust, because I see that harm and benefit come from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not from any of you. Slaves [*mamālik*] and kings [*mulūk*] are all the same to me.

You should criticize yourselves and others on account of the sacred law [*shar'*], not because of the passions [*hawā*], the lower self [*nafs*] and natural inclinations [*tab'*]. When the sacred law is silent on a subject, you must observe a corresponding silence, and where it has something to say, conform to it in respect of what it has to say. O young man! Do not criticize others because of your lower self and your passions; criticize them rather on account of your faith. Faith is the critic [*munkir*], while certitude [*yaqīn*] is the eliminator [of faults], and the Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the Helper [*Nāṣir*] who helps you to succeed and glories in your success. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

If Allāh helps you, none can overcome you. (3:160)

If you help Allāh, He will help you and will make your foothold firm. (47:7)

If you are critical of something blameworthy out of zeal for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will assist you to get rid of it, supporting you against those responsible for it and making them submit to you. But if you are critical of it because of your own lower self, your passions, your devil and your natural impulses, He will disappoint you and fail to support you against the people concerned, and you will not be able to get rid of it. Faith is what is entitled to criticize [*al-īmān huwa'l-munkir*], so any critic whose criticism does not stem from faith is no critic at all. Criticism, regardless of your personal wishes, must be for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not for the sake of His creatures; for the sake of His religion [*dīn*], not for your own sake; for Him, not for you.

Abandon your crazy delusion and be sincere in your actions. Death is waiting in ambush for you. There is no way for you to avoid crossing

its bridge. Give up this greediness that has put you to shame. Whatever belongs to you must surely come your way, and whatever belongs to others will not come to you, so devote your attention to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and stop chasing after what belongs to you and what belongs to others. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said to His Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

Strain not your eyes toward that which We have given you for some pairs among you to enjoy—the flower of this world's life, that We may thereby put them to the test. (20:131)

There is nothing harder on those who really know [*‘arafa*] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) than having to talk with creatures and sit in their company. This is why there might be a thousand knowers [*‘arif*] but only one speaker [*mutakallim*] among them—and he would need the strength of the Prophets (peace be upon them)! How could he not need their strength, when he is intending to sit among people of all types, mingling with those who are capable of understanding and those who cannot understand, when he will sit in the company of both hypocrite and believer? He must experience enormous hardship, patiently enduring things that are so hateful to him. Yet in spite of this, he enjoys protection and receives assistance with what he is involved in, because he is carrying out the orders of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in speaking to the people. He does not speak from his own lower self and his passions, nor of his own choice and will. He is simply compelled to speak, so he is surely protected in the process. If you really wish to know Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you must rid your heart of attaching importance to creatures where harm and benefit are concerned, for only thus will you really get to know Him.

Woe unto you! This world in the hand is permissible. In the pocket it is permissible. To store it up for some practical purpose, with a righteous intention [*niyya ṣāliḥa*], is permissible. In the heart, however, it is not permissible. For it to stand waiting at the door is permissible, but for it to enter into what lies behind the door—no, and you deserve no respect [if you permit it to pass that point]!

When this servant becomes extinct to himself and to all creatures, he becomes as if nonexistent [*mafqūd*], obliterated [*mamḥūw*]. His inner [*bāṭin*] does not undergo change with the advent of misfortunes. He is

brought into existence [*yūjadu*] on the advent of the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he carries it out, and on the advent of His prohibition, so he observes it. He desires nothing and has no greedy craving for anything. Creative power [*takwīn*] comes to his heart. The transformation of substances [*taqlīb al-a'yān*] is committed to his care. Where do you stand in relation to such servants, O traitors in knowledge and practice, O enemies of Allāh and His Messenger, O robbers of the servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? You are involved in manifest wrongdoing and manifest hypocrisy. How much longer will this hypocrisy go on, O scholars, O pious abstainers? How long will you practice your hypocrisy on the kings and rulers, in order to get from them the vanities of this world, its lusts and pleasures? You and most of the kings of this age are treacherous abusers of the property of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and of His servants.

O Allāh, shatter the power of the hypocrites and chastise them, or relent toward them! And crush the tyrants and cleanse the earth of them, or set them straight! Āmīn.

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) then went on to say:

O kings [*mulūk*], O royal slaves [*mamālīk*], O tyrants—and O just and honorable ones! O hypocrites—and O sincere ones! This world lasts up to a set term [*amad*], while the hereafter lasts to all eternity [*abad*]. You must separate from all apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), through your striving and your abstinence. You must cleanse your heart of all but your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must be careful not to let anything ensnare you, not to let anything trap you, not to let anything hold you back from your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). So when your allotted shares come to you, receive them with the hand of [obedience to] the commandment, with the hand of compliance, with an attitude of abstinence from them, not with the hand of preference and fondness for them. When abstinence is practiced continuously it has an effect on the body, so it gives rise to a sadness in the heart and to a leanness in the physique. Then, when this sadness and leanness are realized, relief comes from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) with joy in Him and knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of Him, so that sorrow and care disappear.

The believer [*mu'min*] keeps his heart detached from creatures, and from family, property and children. While he is attending to their needs, his heart is always on the lookout for the arrival of the King's Messenger [*Rasūl al-Malik*]. He has reached the gate of the city, and has said goodbye to his family even while still sitting in their midst. The believer is always taking his leave. He is among creatures, yet he has said goodbye to them. His seeding is with the creation, but his fruition is with the Creator. When the affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] becomes established in the heart, action becomes correct where the outer is concerned, because there is no difference between your outer [*ẓāhir*] and your inner [*bāṭin*]; it is all the same to you whether you be rich or poor, whether people come or go, and whether they give you blame or praise. How can you fail to spit them both out, when you have no space in which to digest them, since your heart is filled with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), with remembrance of Him and longing for Him? For at this stage:

There, protection belongs only to Allāh, the True. (18:44)

You become a true lover [*muḥibb haqq*], a scholar imbued with knowledge, a sage confirmed in wisdom, a cultured person of refined education, independent of creatures, meaning able to do without them.

O ignorant one, you should learn from your ignorance! You have given up learning and taken it upon yourself to teach. Spare yourself the trouble! Nothing can come of you and nobody can succeed at your hands, because if a person is incapable of being his own teacher, how can he be the teacher of others?

O my people! Do not underestimate the power of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so that you join the unbelievers [*kuffār*]. You must work in accordance with the rule of law [*ḥukm*], until this leads you to work in accordance with knowledge [*ilm*]. Once you can really work, you will experience the [divine] power [*qudra*]. Then He will put creative energy [*takwīn*] into the hands of your hearts and your innermost beings [*asrār*]. When there is no longer any barrier between you and Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) as far as your heart is concerned, He will empower you with creative force. He will show you

the stores of His secret treasure, feed you with the food of His gracious favor and let you drink the wine of His intimate friendship [*uns*]. He will seat you at the table of nearness to Him.

All this is the fruit of knowledge of the Book and the Sunna. Put them both into practice and do not depart from them, until the Master of Knowledge [*Ṣāhib al-‘ilm*], Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), comes to you and takes you to Him. When the teacher of the law [*ḥukm*] attests that you are proficient in his book, he will move you on to the book of knowledge. When you have mastered this, your heart and your inner content [*ma‘nā*] will be set straight, with the Prophet in their company, holding their hands and leading them into the presence of the King, saying to them: “Here you are with your Lord!”

Fifty-second Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 3rd of Ramaḍān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O my people! Escape to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)! Flee to Him from creatures and this world, and from everything whatsoever that is apart from Him. Go home to Him with your hearts. Surely you have heard His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Do not all things come home to Allāh? (42:53)

O young man! Do not regard creatures in terms of survival [*baqā'*], but view them rather in terms of annihilation [*fanā'*]. Do not consider them in terms of injury and benefit, but see them rather in terms of incapacity and degradation. Affirm the Oneness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), have total trust in Him and do not talk irrationally about things He has already finished off. He has already finished off this world and everything that is visible within it. He has already finished off the creation and all the permutations therein. The heart of the believer is empty of all this, especially when he is detached from material concerns [*asbāb*], for he is then confirmed in his spiritual state [*ḥāl*]. If material concerns and dependants do come to him, he will receive support in dealing with them, and be given the strength to endure the hardships they bring. Thus his heart remains free under all circumstances from everything apart from his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), always in the beyond [*ghaiba*]. He never asks Him to effect change or transformation, because he knows that what He has decided is unchangeable, that the allotment has been settled and will not be increased or reduced. He therefore seeks neither increase nor reduction. He seeks neither to postpone his allotted share nor to have

it come to him more quickly, because he realizes that it has a specific time appointed for it. Thus he and his peers are the sensible people, while the crazy ones are those who try to obtain increase or reduction, acceleration or postponement. If someone is content with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), he will comply with His wishes in all that concerns himself and others. Then He will love him, acquaint [*arrafa*] him with Himself, and escort him for the rest of his life along the highway of His will. He will help him to succeed, then He will draw him near and say to him: “I am your Lord”—while he is bewildered and at his wit’s end, as He said to Moses (blessing and peace be upon him): “I am your Lord” (20:12).

To Moses (upon our Prophet and upon him be the most excellent blessing and peace) He spoke outwardly [*zāhiran*], while to the heart of this knower [*‘ārif*] He will speak inwardly [*bāṭinan*], letting him hear this as a mercy and a kindness to him, and as a gracious favor to His Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). The miracles [*mu‘jizāt*] of the Prophets (peace be upon them) are outwardly manifest, while the charismatic power [*karāma*] of the saints [*awliyā’*] is experienced inwardly. The latter are the heirs of the Prophets. They uphold the religion [*dīn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and preserve it from the devils among human beings and jinn. You are ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), of His Messengers and of them.

What can make you aware, O hypocrite, of the nature and function of the people [of the Lord]? You read the Qur’ān, but without knowing what you are reading. You act without knowing that what you are doing is for this world only, with no value in the hereafter. Then, after all this, you find fault with them! Be sensible! You must learn good manners, repent and hold your tongue. You do not have a clue about Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not a clue about His Messengers [*rusul*], not a clue about His saints [*awliyā’*], and not a clue about His knowledge of you and all His creatures. You must practice repentance and silence. You must reflect on your death and the fact that you will be carried to the grave. Only then will you acquire knowledge. You must work with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), until He gives you a light with which to illuminate this world and the hereafter.

Take instruction from what I am saying to you. Work hard at it, and stop depending on fate [*sābiqa*], for that is foolish and degrading on your

part; it is the pretext of the lazy. We do not concern ourselves with fate. We gird our loins, exert ourselves and set about our work. We do not say, “he said this and we said that, and why and how....” We do not probe into the foreknowledge of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). We make our best effort, and He does whatever He wills. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

He shall not be questioned. (21:23)

When your business is concluded and the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) draws you close to Him—and when you are truly ready for this, He will make you recoil from this world and awaken your interest in the hereafter—you will find your name inscribed on the door of your nearness to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He): “X son of Y, one of the emancipated slaves of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).” This is something that is not subject to change or alteration, to reduction or increase, so now your gratitude to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) will be multiplied, as will your performance of good deeds and acts of obedience in His presence. At the same time, you must not cease to hold fear in the hand of your heart, nor must you underestimate His power, and you must recite His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Allāh erases what He will, and establishes (what He will), and with Him is the original source of the Book [*ummu’l-kitāb*]. (13:39)

Do not stick at that inscription, for He who wrote it is the One who has the power to erase it. He who erected it is the One who has the power to demolish it. You must always be in a state of obedience, fear, dread and caution, until death comes to you and you pass from this world to the hereafter in a state of safety, for then you will be immune to change and alteration.

O you who try to compete, with your ignorance and hypocrisy, your desire for this world and your clamoring for it! O you who devour unlawful food [*ḥarām*! How can you aspire to the light of the heart, purity of the innermost being [*sirr*] and the utterance of wisdom [*ḥikma*]? As for the people [of the Lord], their speech is of necessity and their sleep is the sleep of the drowned. Their diet is the diet of the sick, for such is their condition until the prescription expires. They may be

likened to the angels, concerning whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

They do not disobey Allāh in what he commands them, but do what they are commanded. (66:6)

They resemble them, only more so, for the angels are their attendants and bearers, who wait upon them in this world and the hereafter.

O my people! If my speech is not getting through to you, then hear it with faith [*īmān*] and belief [*taṣḍīq*]. My speech is addressed to the heart, so you must listen to it with your hearts and your innermost beings [*asrār*], then you will be inwardly and outwardly refreshed, and the power of your lower selves [*nufūs*] and your passions [*ahwiya*] will be broken, and the fires of your carnal desires [*shahawāt*] will be extinguished. Your worst problem is your carnal desires, which make you love this world and dislike poverty, and which lead you into dangerous situations.

One of the wise (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) is reported as having said: "The real meaning of pious devotion [*taqwā*] is that if you were to gather up everything that is in your heart, set it on an uncovered tray, and then walk all around the market with it, there would be nothing there to make you feel in any way embarrassed." O ignorant one, as if it were not enough that you are not pious, when someone tells you to observe your duty to Allāh, you get angry, when someone tells you the truth, you treat what you hear as insignificant, and then if someone criticizes you, you feel enraged and take your rage out on him. The Commander of the Believers, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be well pleased with him) is reported as having said: "If a person is piously devoted to Allāh, he does not vent his rage. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in one of His sayings:

I used to love you when you obeyed Me, then when you disobeyed Me I hated you.

The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) loves you not because He has any need of you, but as a mercy to you, so He loves you for your sake, not for His own. He loves your obedience to Him because the benefit from it accrues to you. You must give your attention and interest to anyone who loves you for your sake, and avoid anyone who loves you for his own.

The believer has forgotten everything else and remembered his Master (Almighty and Glorious is He), so he has obtained His nearness and life in and with Him. Since his total trust [*tawakkul*] is genuine, He will surely protect him from trouble and care in this world and the hereafter. When the believer's trust and his affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] are genuine, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will treat him as he treated Abraham (peace be upon him), giving him the latter's inner content [*ma'nā*] and state [*ḥāl*], though not his nickname [*laqab*], * feeding him with his food, quenching his thirst with his drink, and lodging him in the hallway of his house, though not giving him his personal station. Thus the believer's line of descent [*nasab*] from him will be established, with regard to spiritual content, not in respect of form.

Have you no sense of shame? Your greed has brought you to the point where you are serving tyrants and consuming unlawful food [*ḥarām*]. How long will you go on exploiting and serving kings? The dominion of those you serve must soon pass away, to be succeeded by the service of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), who will never pass away. Be sensible and be satisfied with just a very little of this world, until much comes to you from the hereafter. Take the allotted shares with the hand of your abstinence [*zuhd*]. Your taking should be at door of your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He), with the hand of His power and His action and in His company, not in the company of this world and not with its hand, and not at the doors of potentates [*salāṭīm*] in the company of the natural impulses [*ṭab'*], the passions [*hawā*], the devil [*shaitān*] and the common herd [*'awāmm*].

If you take [your share of] this world while your heart is at the door of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), the angels and the spirits [*arwāḥ*] of the Prophets [*anbiyā'*] will be all around you.

What a vast difference between these two subjects and situations! The people [of the Lord] are intelligent. They say: "We do not consume our shares of this world on the street, nor in our houses. We eat in His presence only!" The abstinent [*zāhidūn*] will eat in Paradise, while the knowers [*'arifūn*] eat in His presence even when they are still in this world. As for the lovers [*muḥibbūn*], they eat neither in this world nor in the hereafter. Their food and drink are their intimate friendship

**Khalīlu'llāh*, "Bosom Friend of Allāh".

[*uns*], their nearness to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and their vision of Him. They have traded this world for the hereafter, then they have traded the hereafter for their nearness to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), the Lord of both this world and the hereafter. Those who are truthful [*ṣādiqūn*] in their love of Him, have traded both this world and the hereafter in exchange for His countenance. They wished to have Him to the exclusion of all else, so when the buying and selling was over, generosity prevailed, and He returned this world and the hereafter to them as a gift. He commanded them to take the pair, so they accepted them just because of the commandment, although they were already well satisfied—suffering from indigestion, indeed!—without them. They did so in compliance with the decree [*qadar*] and to be well-mannered in the company of the Ordainer [*Muqaddir*]. They accepted and received, saying:

Surely you know what we want. (11:79)

“You know that we are well content with You to the exclusion of all else, and we are content with hunger and thirst, nakedness, humiliation and degradation, and to be prostrate at Your door.” Once they have come to be content with this and have made an agreement with their lower selves [*nufūs*] to accept it calmly, He looks upon them with mercy, so He gives them dignity after their humiliation, enriches them after their poverty, and allows them to draw near to Him in this world and the hereafter.

The believer abstains from this world, so his abstinence [*zuhd*] removes the dirt and filth and murky confusion from his inner [*bāṭin*]. Then the hereafter comes and settles in his heart. But then comes the hand of zeal, to remove it from his heart and teach him that this is an obstacle to the nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). So now he gives up all interest in creatures whatsoever, carries out the commandments of the sacred law [*sharʿ*] and observes its rules as they apply equally to him and to the common folk. The eyes of his insight are opened, so that he perceives his own personal faults as well as the faults of all created beings. He therefore relies on none but his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), listens to none but Him, takes no understanding from any but Him, puts no trust in anything but His promise [*waʿd*] and is not afraid of anything but His threat [*waʿid*]. He gives up all preoccupation with anything but Him and devotes his

attention to Him alone. Then when this process is completed, he is in a situation which no eye ever saw, which no ear ever heard of, and which never occurred to the heart of any mortal man.

O young man! Attend to your own needs, be useful to yourself and then to others. Do not be like the candle that burns itself out while providing light for others. Do not embark on something on account of you, your passions [*hawā*] and your lower self [*nafs*]. When the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wants you for some purpose, He will equip you for it. If He wishes you to be useful to His creatures, He will send you back to them, and He will give you firmness and courtesy for dealing with them, as well as strength to endure the trouble they cause. He will make room in your heart for creatures. He will open your breast wide and fill it with the elements of wisdom [*hikam*]. He will take care of your inner and gladden your innermost being [*sirr*]. So now it will be He, not you. Surely you have heard His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

O David, We have appointed you as a viceroy in the earth. (38:26)

He did not say, “you have appointed yourself.” Thus the people [of the Lord] have no will of their own and no personal preference, but are simply at the disposal of the commandment of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), His action [*fi’l*], His management and His will. O you who have deviated from the straight path, do not offer any pretext, for you have no evidence to show. The highway is right in front of you. What is lawful [*ḥalāl*] is quite plain and what is unlawful [*ḥarām*] is quite clear. How impudent you are toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)! How little is your fear of Him, and how great your disdain for His sight! The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Fear Allāh as if you saw Him, for even if you do not see Him, He surely sees you!

The people of wakefulness have seen Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with their hearts, so their scattered fragments have come together. They have been poured into a mold and become one single item. The barriers between them and Him are tumbling down. The outer structures [*mabānī*] have been demolished and the inner contents [*ma’ānī*] remain. The links have been disconnected and the lords have

been deposed, so they have nothing left apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They have no speech, no movement and no joy in anything until they have genuinely experienced this, so when this really comes about the matter is settled where they are concerned. First they leave the slavery [*riqq*] of this world and servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*] to it, then they leave behind everything whatsoever apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They do not cease having dealings with Him and in His house they are put to the test:

That We may see how you behave. (10:14)

The innermost being [*sirr*] is the king, the heart [*qalb*] is his chief minister, while the lower self, the tongue and the other organs are servants in the presence of these two. The innermost being draws its water from the ocean of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The heart draws its water from the innermost being. The tranquil self [*nafs muṭma‘inna*] draws its water from the heart. The tongue draws its water from the lower self, and the other limbs and organs draw their water from the tongue. If the tongue is sound, the heart will be sound, but if the one is corrupt the other will also be corrupt. Your tongue needs the bridle of pious devotion [*taqwā*] and turning in repentance from irrational speech and hypocrisy. If you persevere in this, the eloquence of the tongue will be transformed into the eloquence of the heart. Then when this process is completed, it will be enlightened and the light will be transmitted from it to the tongue and the other parts of the body. At this stage, speaking with the tongue brings nearness, and one who is in the state of nearness [*qurb*] has no language, no prayer of supplication [*du‘ā’*] and no remembrance [*dhikr*]. Prayer, remembrance and speech are in distance [*bu‘d*]. In nearness there is only silence, quietness, contentment and enjoyment of the vision.

O Allāh, let us be among those who see You in this world with the eyes of the heart, and in the hereafter with the eyes of the head, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Fifty-third Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 7th of Ramaḍān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

There is no escape from trial and tribulation, especially for those who make pretentious claims. Were it not for tribulation and trial, many people would lay claim to saintship [*wilāya*]. This is why a certain wise man said: “Tribulation has been put in charge of saintship, so that it cannot be pretended.” One of the marks of the saint [*walī*] is his patience with the insults of creatures and his tolerant attitude toward them. The saints [*awliyā’*] turn a blind eye to what they see people doing, and they turn a deaf ear to what they hear from them. They make them a present of their honor and dignity.

Your love of the thing makes you blind and deaf.

They love the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so they are blind and deaf to any but Him. They relate to creatures with pleasant speech, friendliness and courtesy, although they are sometimes angry with them out of zeal for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and in accord with His anger. They are physicians, who are aware that for every sickness there is a remedy. The physician does not treat all sick people with one and the same medicine. As far as their hearts and inner contents [*ma’ānī*] are concerned, in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) they are like the Companions of the Cave [*aṣḥāb al-kahf*]. In the case of the latter, it was Gabriel (peace be upon him) who turned them this way and that, while in the case of these others it is the hand of power and mercy and grace that turns them. The hand of love turns their hearts and conveys them from state [*ḥāl*] to state. They leave their interest in this world to seekers of this world, and their interest in the hereafter to seekers of the hereafter, while their

Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) belongs to them. They are not stingy with anything. If worldly things are sought from them, and they happen to have them, they give them freely. If they are asked for the reward of the hereafter, they give it freely. They give worldly goods to the poor among them, and give the reward of the hereafter to those who fall short in seeking it. They leave the created [*muḥdath*] to the created, and leave the Creator [*Muḥdith*] for themselves. They leave the shell, because everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a shell, while the quest for Him and nearness to Him is the kernel.

One of the wise (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) is reported as having said: “No one except the knower [*‘ārif*] can laugh in the face of the sinner.” Yes, he gives him commands and prohibitions and tolerates his insulting behavior, and it is only the knowers [*‘arifūn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) who are capable of this; not so the abstinent [*zuḥḥād*], the servants [*‘ibād*] and the aspirants [*murīdūn*]. How could they fail to treat sinners with compassion, when they are the site of mercy, the station of repentance and apology? The character [*khulq*] of the knower partakes of the characteristics [*akhlāq*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for he works hard for the deliverance of the sinner from the control of Satan, the lower self [*nafs*] and the passions [*hawā*]. If one of you saw his own son a prisoner in the hands of an unbeliever [*kāfir*], would you not make every effort to secure his release? Well, that is how it is with the knower [*‘ārif*]. All creatures are like his children. He addresses people in the language of the rules of law [*ḥukm*], then he feels compassion for them because of his familiarity with knowledge [*‘ilm*], for he sees the workings [*af‘āl*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) within them. He observes the emergence of the [divine] judgments and decrees from the door of the law [*ḥukm*] and of knowledge [*‘ilm*], but he keeps this hidden. He addresses people in terms of the law, which is commandment and prohibition, and not in terms of knowledge, which is secret [*sirr*].

The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has sent the Messengers and revealed the Books. He has given caution and warning, in order to assemble the evidence against creatures. His knowledge concerning them you must neither probe nor question. In the sphere

of the rules of law [*ḥukm*] there is room for maneuver [*karr wa-farr*], while in the sphere of knowledge [*‘ilm*] there is steadfastness. You need the rules that apply to you and others in common, and you also need the knowledge that is special [*khāṣṣ*] to you alone. If one of you puts the outer knowledge [*‘ilm ṣāḥir*] into practice, the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) will feed him with some inner knowledge [*‘ilm bāṭin*]. He will feed him the inner law [*ḥukm bāṭin*] as a bird feeds its young. He will treat him like this because he believes and practices his [the Messenger’s] outer words, namely his *Shari‘a*.

When the human being is sound, there is none so sound as he. When he is pure, there is none so pure as he. When he is near [to his Lord], there is none so near as he. The ignorant person sees with the eye of his head, the intelligent person sees with the eye of his mind, and the knower [*‘arif*] sees with the eye of his heart, possessed of the essence of knowledge [*mujawharan ‘āliman*]. All creatures are given to him to swallow, so they are swallowed up in him. He has nothing left apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so at this point he says: “He is the First and the Last, the Outer and the Inner” (57:3). The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) becomes his outer and his inner, his first and his last, his form and his content. He has nothing but Him, so now he establishes his love permanently with Him in this world and the hereafter, complying with His wishes under all circumstances. He prefers His good pleasure and the displeasure of others. No blame attaches to him. As one of the wise (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) has said: “Agree with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) concerning creatures, and do not agree with creatures concerning Allāh (Exalted is He). Broken is he who gets broken, and mended is he who gets mended.”

Your devil, your passions [*hawā*], your natural inclinations [*ṭab‘*] and your bad companions are your enemies, so beware of them in case they make you fall into perdition. Acquire knowledge so that you will know how to combat them and be on your guard against them, then you will know how to worship your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). From the ignorant person no worship is accepted. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

If someone worships Allāh in ignorance, what he does wrong is more than what he does right.

The worship of the ignorant person does not amount to anything; indeed, he is in total corruption and total darkness. Knowledge is also useless without practice, and practice is useless without sincerity [*ikhhlās*]. All practice without sincerity is useless, and is not accepted of the practitioner. If you have knowledge and do not put it into practice, that knowledge will be evidence against you. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

The ignorant person will be punished once, and the learned person seven times.

Why does the ignorant man not learn? Why does the learned man not put his knowledge into practice? You must learn and practice and teach, for this will give you all good things combined. When you hear a word of knowledge, put it into practice and teach it to someone else, you have two rewards: the reward for knowledge and the reward for the sharing of knowledge. This world is darkness and knowledge is a light within it, so he who has no knowledge is blundering about in this darkness and doing more harm than good.

O you who lay claim to knowledge, do not take from the hand of your lower self [*nafs*], your natural impulses [*ṭabʿ*] and your devil [*shaitān*]. Do not take from the hand of your present existence [*wujūd*]. Do not take from the hand of your pretense [*riyāʿ*] and your hypocrisy [*nifāq*]. Your pious abstinence [*zuhd*] is on the outside [*ẓāhir*], while your appetite is on the inside [*bāṭin*]. This is a futile abstinence, for which you will be punished. You are trying to cheat the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), but He knows what is in your private and public lives, and what is in your heart. In His presence there is no distinction between private and public, and there is no concealment. Say: “Woe, alas and shame! The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is surely aware of all my actions by night and by day. He is watching, yet I am not embarrassed by His gaze!” You must repent your insolence toward Him and draw near to Him by performing the obligatory religious duties [*farāʾiḍ*] and observing the prohibitions. You must give up sins both outwardly and inwardly, and do tangible works of charity. Through this you will reach His door and draw near to Him, and He will love you and make His creatures love you. He will love you directly, without His creatures, then He will transmit this to His creatures.

When Allāh and His angels love you, all creatures will love you, apart from the unbelievers and the hypocrites, for they will not go along with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in loving you. Everyone who has faith [*īmān*] in his heart will love the believer [*mu'min*], and everyone who has hypocrisy [*nifāq*] in his heart will hate him, so do not feel the kind of hatred felt by the unbelievers [*kāfirūn*], the hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*], devils [*shayāṭīn*] and evil spirits [*abālisa*]. The hypocrites and unbelievers are the devils of mankind.

The believer who is truly convinced [*mūqīn*] and experienced [*ʿarīf*] is in isolation from creatures with his heart, his innermost being [*sirr*] and his spiritual content [*ma'nā*]. He reaches a state where he is incapable of either shielding his own self from harm or procuring benefit for it. He becomes prostrate before the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), retaining no power or strength of his own. Then when he is genuinely at this stage, good comes to him from all directions.

Do not try to match the people [of the Lord] with mere claims and pretensions and wishful thinking. Nothing will come of this. There is nothing to be said until you are blind to material means [*asbāb*]. There is nothing to be said until your legs are crippled and desist from running to people's doors. There is nothing to be said until your heart and your mind and your face turn away from creatures and toward the Creator, so that your back is toward creatures and your face toward the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Your outer being and your physical form must go toward creatures, and your inner being, your kernel [*lubb*] and your spiritual content [*ma'nā*] toward the Creator. Then your heart will come to be like the hearts of the angels and the Prophets [*nabiyyūn*]. Your heart will eat and quench its thirst from their food and drink. This is a matter that relates to hearts and innermost beings and spiritual contents, not to physical forms.

O Allāh, delight our hearts, clothe our innermost beings with robes of honor, and set our minds on what is between us and You, beyond the understanding of creatures and our own understanding.

O you who are present and you who are absent, on the Day of Resurrection you will see a surprise from me. I shall argue on behalf of the hypocrites, so how about on behalf of the believers?

O Allāh, enable me to dispense with everything! Make me satisfied with You to the exclusion of all apart from You! Make the teacher independent of the pupils and of what is in their houses, and make his home the place where food is offered along with teaching! O Allāh, You know that these words got the better of me, so forgive me for them. My allowance is finished, and I have received from You the remainder of the allowance for the children, the servants and emergencies, so I beg You to ease this situation with the goodness of my heart and the purity of my innermost being.

O my people! You think that I am taking from you as I look at you. No, that is unworthy! I take only from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not from you; it is He who operates through your hands. When I was with you I did not know you, then when I went away from you I got to know you. I am the stumbling block of the hypocrites and the test of the knowers [*ʿarīfūn*]. I do beat the hypocrites, but only with dippers, not with a stick. The food on my table is for you, and I do not eat till you have finished. I have a portion that is from Someone other than you. After you leave there is a dish for me from my Master [*Ṣāhib*], before whom I stand and serve. Can you not see, O people of insight, that my sleeves are rolled up and my waist is belted tight?

Someone asked a question, saying: “The Messenger [*rasūl*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) to His Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*] is Gabriel (peace be upon him), so who is His Messenger to His saints [*awliyāʾ*]?”

The Shaikh replied: “He is His Messenger to them without intermediary, through His mercy, His grace, His favors, His inspiration [*ilhām*], His glances into their hearts and their innermost beings [*asrār*], and His tender affection for them. They see Him when they are up, when they are in bed, with the eyes of their hearts, their innermost beings and their constant wakefulness.”

O my people! All that cuts you off from real knowledge [*maʿrifā*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and of his saints [*awliyāʾ*] is your love of this world, your greed for it and your desire to have plenty

of what it has to offer. You must remember the hereafter and leave this world alone.

O Allāh, perfect generosity and perfect liberality are among Your attributes [*ṣifāt*], and we are Your slaves, so grant us a tiny speck of them! Āmīn.

Fifty-fourth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 10th of Ramaḍān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

O young man! Two steps and you have arrived: One step away from this world and one step away from the hereafter; one step away from your lower self [*nafs*] and one step away from creatures. Leave this outer [*ẓāhir*] and you will reach the inner [*bāṭin*], initially then finally. You must be ready to make a start, while the completion of the process depends on Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). From you the beginning and from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) the conclusion. Take the shovel and the palm-leaf basket and sit at the entrance to the place of work, so that when you are called you will be close to the Employer. Do not sit on your mattress, under your blanket and behind locked doors, then expect to find work and employment. Keep your heart close to remembrance [*dhikr*], and remind it of the Day of Resurrection. Reflect on those crumbling tombs. Reflect on how the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will assemble all creatures and resurrect them in His presence. If you persist in this reflection, your heart will lose its hardness and be purified of its murky confusion. If the building rests on a good foundation it will be firm and stable, but if it has no foundation its collapse will come quickly. If you construct your state [*ḥāl*] on the rules [*aḥkām*] of the outer law [*ḥukm ẓāhir*], no creature will be able to demolish it, but if you do not construct it on this basis, no state will be firmly established for you, you will not attain to any station [*maqām*], and the hearts of the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*] will always despise you and prefer not to see you.

Woe unto you, O ignorant one! Is religion [*dīn*] a game? Is it misrepresentation? No, and you deserve no respect, O you who lurk in disguise! You consider yourself qualified to speak to the people,

although you are devoid of competence. Only a handful of people are fit for this, a few individuals among the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]; otherwise their habit is to keep silent and use sign-language, hardly ever saying a word. Some of them are commanded to speak, so they talk to the people with reluctance.

After some discussion, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) went on to say:

Knowing through information [*khābar*] comes to be seeing with direct vision [*mu'āyana*], through a transformation that concerns your heart and the purity of your innermost being [*sirr*]. This is why the Commander of the Believers, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh the Exalted ennoble his countenance and be well pleased with him), said: "Even if the veil were removed, my certitude [*yaqīn*] would be no greater." He also said: "I do not worship a Lord I cannot see," and, "My heart has let me see my Lord."

O ignorant ones! You must mingle with the scholars, serve them and learn from them. Knowledge is received from the mouths of men. You must attend the sessions of the scholars on your best behavior, and refrain from contradicting them. Try to benefit from them, in order to acquire some of their knowledge, receive their blessings, and learn many useful lessons from them. In the company of the knowers [*'arīfūn*] you must sit in silence, and in the company of the abstinent [*zāhidūn*] adopt a favorable attitude toward them.

The knower [*'arīf*] is one who at every moment comes closer to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) than he was the moment before. At every moment his humility toward his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is renewed, as is his submissiveness toward Him. He humbles himself to One who is present, not absent. His humility increases in proportion to his nearness to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and his dumbness increases in proportion to his witnessing [*mushāhada*]. When someone really knows [*'arafa*] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), muteness overcomes the tongue of his lower self [*nafs*], his natural impulses [*ṭab'*], his passions [*hawā*], his habits [*'āda*] and his existence [*wujūd*]. As for the tongue of his heart, his innermost being [*sirr*], his spiritual state [*ḥāl*], his station [*maqām*] and his gift [*'aṭā'*], it speaks to

declare the blessings he enjoys. This is why they sit with them in silence, to benefit from them and to drink the wine that matures in their hearts. If someone mingles frequently with the knowers [*ʿarīfūn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), he comes to know his own self and becomes submissive to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is why it has been said that: “He who really knows his own self, knows his Lord [*man ʿarafa nafsahu ʿarafa rabbahu*].” It [the self] is the obstacle between the servant [*ʿabd*] and his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He who really knows his own self becomes humble toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His creatures. When he knows it well, he becomes wary of it and devotes himself to giving thanks to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for the knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of it. He realizes that He would not have given him that knowledge unless He wished him well in this world and the hereafter, so his outer [*ẓāhir*] is devoted to giving Him thanks [*shukr*] and his inner [*bāṭin*] to giving Him praise [*ḥamd*]. His outer is fragmented, but his inner is united. His happiness is within him, while his sorrow is on the surface to veil his spiritual state.

Thus the knower’s condition is the reverse the believer’s, since the latter keeps his sadness in his heart and wears his cheerfulness on his face. The believer [*muʾmin*] is an informed person [*ʿalīm*] standing at the door, not knowing what is in store for him: Will he be accepted, or will he be rejected? Will the door be opened for him, or will it stay shut in his face? One who really knows his own self is therefore in contrast to the believer in every respect. The believer is the owner of a spiritual state [*ṣāhib ḥāl*], but the state is subject to change, while the knower is the owner of a spiritual station [*ṣāhib maqām*] and the station is firmly established. The believer is afraid of the alteration of his state and the loss of his faith [*īmān*], so his sadness is always in his heart and his cheerfulness is always on his face, concealing his sadness. He may smile in your face when he speaks to you, but his heart is separated by his sadness. As for the knower, his sadness shows on his face, because he presents creatures with the face of warning. He cautions them and gives them commandments and prohibitions on behalf of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace).

The people [of the Lord] put into practice what they have heard, so their practice brings them near to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and

Glorious is He), for Whose sake they make the effort. They hear His admonitions without intermediary, with the ears of their hearts. This happens when they are in a state of absence [*ghaiba*] and sleep in relation to creatures, but of presence and wakefulness with the Creator. When your heart is truly sound, you will always be in a state of absence and sleep in relation to creatures, but of wakefulness with the Creator, for it will not be distracted from its privacy, even when you are in a public situation. Thus you will never lose the intimations [*mawārid*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and His wise advice [*ḥikam*] will reach you through the innermost being [*sirr*]. The innermost being will inform the heart, the heart will inform the tranquil self [*nafs muṭmaʿinna*], the self will inform the tongue, and the tongue will inform the people. One should either speak to the people in this manner, or not speak at all.

The 'insanity' [*junūn*] of the people [of the Lord] consists in giving up habits based on natural inclination [*ʿādāt ṭabīʿiyya*] and actions motivated by the lower self and the passions [*aḡāl nafsīyya hawāʿiyya*], and in becoming indifferent to carnal desires and pleasures. It is not that they are insane in the same way as those maniacs who have lost their rational minds. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) once said: "If you saw them you would call them insane, and if they saw you they would say: 'These folk have not believed in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for the twinkling of an eye.'"

Your seclusion [*khalwa*] is not genuine, because seclusion means being detached as far as your heart is concerned from all things. Your inner [*bāṭin*] becomes so detached that it is stripped naked, left with neither this world nor the hereafter and with nothing whatsoever apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is the highroad of our predecessors, the Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*], the Messengers [*mursalūn*], the saints [*awliyāʾ*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]. To command what is right and proper and forbid what is wrong and improper [*al-amru bi'l-ma'rūf wa'n-nahyu 'ani'l-munkar*] is dearer to me than a thousand hermits in their cells. The gaze of the lower self must be lowered, curtailed and averted, so that it does not become a cause of your destruction, unless the self becomes subservient to the heart and the innermost being [*sirr*] along with its own servants. It must not go off to follow its own whim, but be united with them both [the heart and the

innermost being], so that there is no difference between it and them. It must command what they command, forbid what they forbid, and prefer what they prefer. Then it will come to be a tranquil self [*nafs muṭma'inna*], and so they will all agree on one single pursuit and one single goal. When the self reaches this condition, it deserves a respite from the struggle against it.

You must not argue with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) about how He works in you and in other creatures. Surely you have heard the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

Where is your obedient service to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), if you do not behave properly? If you do not do so, you will be evicted from the house in disgrace, but if you are well-behaved and compliant, you will be kept there and be treated with honor. The lover [*muḥibb*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a guest in His presence, and the guest does not pick and choose his food, his drink, his clothing and all his circumstances ahead of the people of the household. Instead, he is always accommodating, patient and easily pleased, so he is sure to be told: “You are welcome to what you see and find here!”

When someone really knows [*ʿarafa*] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), this world and the hereafter disappear from his heart, along with everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must ensure that your speech is for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), otherwise let silence be dearer to you. Let your life be lived in obedience to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), otherwise death is preferable for you.

O Allāh, let us live in obedience to You, and resurrect us together with the people devoted to obeying You. Āmīn.

The Shaikh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) also said:

The believer is one who parts company with his own self [*nafs*] and befriends a Shaikh who will train him and teach him. He never stops learning from being small until he dies. At the first stage of his education, the Qurʾān-teacher [*muqriʾ*] gets him to memorize the Book

of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). At the second stage, the scholar teaches him the Sunna of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and with this he is always accompanied by helpful guidance [*tawfiq*]. He puts into practice the knowledge he acquires, and the practice brings him near to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whenever he puts what he learns into practice, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) endows him with knowledge of what he did not know. He makes the heart stand upright on its feet, and sincerity [*ikhhlās*] moves his steps toward the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you are practicing, but you notice that your heart is not close to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and you do not experience the sweetness of worship and intimate friendship [*uns*], you should realize that you are not practicing correctly, and that you are hindered by the defects in your practice. What are those defects? Pretense [*riyā'*], hypocrisy [*nifāq*] and pride [*'ujb*]. O practitioner, you must have sincerity, otherwise do not bother. You must be attentively aware of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in private and in public. Attentive awareness [*murāqaba*] in public is for hypocrites, and in private and public alike for those who are sincere.

Woe unto you! If you see a man or woman of pleasing appearance, you must lower your eyes—the eyes of your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*] and your natural impulses [*tab'*—and remember that the eyes of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) are upon you, then recite:

And you are not occupied with any business and you recite no reading [*qur'ān*] from this (Scripture), and you perform no act, but We are Witness of you when you are engaged therein. And not an atom's weight in the earth or in the sky escapes your Lord, nor what is less than that or greater than that, but it is (written) in a clear Book. (10:61)

Beware of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)! Avert your eyes from gazing at that which is forbidden [*muḥarram*], and remember the watchful gaze of the One who never ceases to watch and be aware. If you do not argue and dispute with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), your servitude [*'ubūdiyya*] to Him will be complete. You will become a true servant and be included in the group concerning whom He has said:

As for My servants, you have no authority over them. (15:42)

When your gratitude to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) becomes a reality, He will inspire [*alḥama*] the hearts and tongues of His creatures with gratitude and affection for you. At this stage, Satan and his cohorts will have no access to you.

To refrain from supplication [*duʿāʾ*] is the strictest form of piety [*ʿazīma*], and the regular practice of it is a dispensation [*rukḥṣa*]. Supplication is a breath of air to one who is drowning, and a skylight for the prisoner until he obtains release from prison and is admitted to the presence of the King. Be sensible! You do not go about it properly when you refrain from supplication, nor do you make your supplications correctly. There is nothing that does not require intention [*niyya*], intelligence, knowledge and the example of one who really knows [*ʿarafa*]. You do not understand what is important to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and to His righteous servants [*ʿibād ṣāliḥūn*]. This is why you have a bad opinion of them. Do not jeopardize your religious beliefs [*adyān*] and your spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] through the way you behave with them. Do not obstruct them in any of their dealings. If the sacred law [*sharʿ*] does not object to them, you should not raise objections against them. They are in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) both outwardly and inwardly. The heart of such a person does not relax from being afraid until He reassures him and vouches for his safety.

Come, O servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) upon the earth! And you, O abstinent ones, come here and learn something! You do not have a clue. Come into my book, so I may teach you something you do not find in your possession. Our hearts [*qulūb*] have a book, our innermost beings [*asrār*] have a book, our lower selves [*nufūs*] have a book, and our limbs and organs [*jawāriḥ*] have a book. These are degrees and stages and a series of steps.

You have not fully accomplished the first step, so how can you reach the second? Islām is not yet real for you, so how can you attain to faith [*īmān*]? Faith is not yet real for you, so how can you attain to conviction [*īqān*]? Conviction is not yet real for you, so how can you attain to intimate knowledge [*maʿrifa*] and saintship [*wilāya*]? Be sensible! You are getting nowhere. Each one of you is seeking leadership of the people without equipment for the task. Leadership [*riyāsa*] of creatures can

only be achieved after abstinence [*zuhd*] from them, from this world, the lower self [*nafs*], the passions [*hawā*], the natural impulses [*ṭabʿ*] and the will [*irāda*]. Leadership comes down from heaven, not from the earth. Saintship [*wilāya*] comes from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), not from creatures. You should always be a follower, not one who is followed; an adherent, not one who attracts adherents. Be content with lowliness and obscurity, then if the opposite is intended for you by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), it will come to you at the proper time.

You must practice surrender [*taslīm*] and delegation [*tafwīḍ*] and the renunciation of your own power and strength, your stubbornness and your idolatrous worship [*shirk*] of creatures and your own self. You must become accustomed to servitude [*ʿubūdiyya*], which means carrying out the [divine] commandments, observing the prohibitions, and bearing misfortunes with patience. The foundation on which this rests is the affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*], and the superstructure consists of righteous deeds [*aʿmāl ṣāliḥa*]. You need to lay a firm foundation for anything you build.

Your intention is not clearly formed, so how can you express yourself? Your silence is not complete, so how can you begin to speak? This kind of speech is addressed to the people on behalf of the Messengers [*rusul*], because they were the people's preachers [*khuṭabāʾ*] and then, when they had departed, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) appointed as their deputies the scholars who put their learning into practice, making them their heirs. Anyone who wishes to be in the position of the Messengers must be the purest of all the people of his time, and the most learned of them in the law [*ḥukm*] and knowledge [*ʿilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You consider this to be a simple matter, you who are so ignorant of Allāh, His Messengers, His saints [*awliyāʾ*] and the righteous ones [*ṣāliḥūn*] among His servants! O you who are ignorant of your lower selves [*nufūs*], your natural impulses [*ṭibāʿ*], your situation in this world and the hereafter, woe unto you! You must stay dumb and quiet until you are made to speak, raised from the dead, resurrected and brought forth.

When a person's knowledge prevails over his passions [*hawā*], that is useful knowledge. How could it not be useful, when it locks the doors

of creatures and opens the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), which is the greatest door of all? When the servant has accomplished this shutting and opening, the crowd departs from him and seclusion comes to him. Robes of honor come to clothe his heart. The keys come to him. The outer shells fall away from him and the kernel [*lubb*] remains. The way of passion is blocked, barred and suppressed, while the way to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is opened and the highroad becomes plainly visible to him; the highroad of his purpose, which is the highroad of the Prophets [*anbiyā'*], Messengers [*mursalūn*] and saints [*awliyā'*] who have gone before. What is this highroad? The highroad of pure clarity with no murky confusion. The highroad of the affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] with no idolatrous association [*shirk*]. The highroad of submissive obedience [*istislām*] with no contention. The highroad of truthfulness [*sidq*] with no falsehood. The highroad of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) without creatures. The highroad of the Originator [*Musabbib*] without secondary cause [*sabab*]. This is the highroad taken by the commanders of the religion [*umarā' ad-dīn*], the sultans and kings of real knowledge [*ma'rifa*], who are the men of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), His close friends [*aṣfiyā'*] and noblemen [*nujabā'*], the supporters of His religion, fighters in His cause and lovers in His cause.

Woe unto you! How can you claim to follow the road of these people [of the Lord], when you are an idolatrous worshipper [*mushrik*] of yourself and other creatures? You have no faith [*īmān*] while your fears and hopes are attached to those who inhabit the face of the earth. You have no abstinence while there is anything in this world that you desire. You have no affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] while you see any but Him on your path toward Him. The knower [*ʿarif*] is a stranger in this world and the hereafter, and an abstainer [*zāhid*] from them both and from everything whatsoever apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He); he has no interest in anything but Him.

O my people! Listen to me and dispel suspicion of me from your hearts. How can you be suspicious of me and gossip about me behind my back, when I am so compassionate toward you? I bear your burdens. I stitch up the holes in your deeds. I intercede with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) to grant acceptance of your good deeds and tolerance of your bad deeds. Anyone who really knows me will stay

with me until he dies, regarding me as his pleasure and entertainment, his food, his drink and his clothing, and feeling so satisfied with me that he needs nobody else.

O young man! How can you fail to love me, when I want you for your sake, not for my own? I wish for your well-being and your deliverance from the murderous and deceiving hand of this world. How long will you go on chasing after it? Soon it will turn on you and kill you. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) does not leave His lovers with this world, not for a single moment. He does not trust it with them, and does not leave them with it or with any other than Himself. No, He is with them and they are with Him. Their hearts are always remembering Him, present before Him, turning away from all others and approaching Him. So He is with them, protecting them and keeping them company.

O Allāh, include us among their number, keep us safe as You keep them safe, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also went on to say:

O hypocrite! Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the One who reveals [*al-Muḥḥir*] things to any of His servants He wishes. He is the One who invites them [*al-Munāḍī*]. He is the One who unites [*al-Jāmiʿ*] the hearts of creatures with whomever He wishes among His servants. He is the One in charge [*al-Musakhkhir*]. You would like to use your hypocrisy to bind people's hearts to you, but nothing will come of this.

O young man! You must leave your desires [*shahawāt*] beneath your feet and turn away from them with all of your heart. Then, if any part of them is destined for you in the foreknowledge [*sābiqa ʿilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), it will come to you in its proper time, when you will be welcome to enjoy it to the full. You will therefore take it with the hand of dignity, not with the hand of degradation. At the same time, you will receive from the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) the reward for having abstained from it, and He will regard you with respect, because you were not greedy and importunate

in seeking it. Whenever you run away from your allotted shares [*aqsām*], they cling to you and come chasing after you, so it is not really possible to abstain from them. It is nevertheless essential to avoid them before they are due to arrive.

Learn from me about abstinence and acquisition. Do not sit in your corner with your ignorance for company. Apply yourself to study, then go into seclusion. Apply yourself to the study of the law [*ḥukm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and put it into practice, then isolate yourself from everyone, with the exception of a few individuals who are learned [*‘ulamā’*] in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). That you should mingle with them and hear from them is better for you than secluding yourself. When you encounter one of them, you should stick to him and learn from him how to acquire knowledge [*‘ilm*] and experience [*ma‘rifā*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must acquire this learning by hearing it from their mouths. Knowledge is received from the mouths of men, from these men who are learned in the law [*ḥukm*] and knowledge [*‘ilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Once you have accomplished this, you should go into solitary seclusion, without self [*nafs*], devil [*shaiṭān*], passion [*hawā*], natural inclination [*ṭab‘*], ordinary habit [*‘āda*] and attention to creatures. When you have truly attained this isolation, you will be surrounded by the angels and by the spirits [*arwāḥ*] of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] and their noble influences [*himam*]. If you isolate yourself from creatures in this manner, well and good. Otherwise, your isolation is a form of hypocrisy and you are wasting your time for nothing. You will be in hellfire in this world and the hereafter; in this world in the hellfire of misfortunes, and in the hereafter in the hellfire prepared for hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*] and unbelievers [*kāfirūn*].

O Allāh, grant pardon, forgiveness, tolerance, forbearance and renewed grace. Do not expose us to disgrace. Do not chastise us for our sins. O Allāh, O Generous One [*Karīm*], You have said:

And He it is who accepts repentance from His servants, and pardons evil deeds. (42:25)

Relent toward us and pardon us! Āmīn.

Woe unto you! You lay claim to knowledge, yet your joy is the joy of the ignorant, and your anger is like theirs. Your happiness lies in this world and the attention you receive from creatures, so it makes you forget the [divine] wisdom [*ḥikma*] and hardens your heart. The believer [*mu'min*] rejoices only in Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not in anything other than Him. If rejoicing is inevitable, rejoice. If it is because of something worldly, dedicate it to the obedient service of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Let it be useful to the servants of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and help them to perform their works of obedience. You must continue to feel fear, until your heart and your innermost being are told, as He told Moses and Aaron [*Hārūn*] (peace be upon them both):

Fear not, for I am with you both. I hear and I see. (20:46)

Fifty-fifth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 17th of Ramaḍān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

If someone wishes to receive contentment with the judgment [*qaḍā'*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), let him practice constant remembrance of death, for remembering death makes afflictions and misfortunes seem insignificant. You must not be distrustful of His intentions toward yourself, your property or your children, but say: "My Lord knows me better than I do." If you always maintain this attitude, you will experience the pleasure of contentment and compliance. Misfortunes will depart, root and branch, and in their place you will receive blessings and delights. When you are compliant and happily content in conditions of adversity, blessings will come to you from all sides and from everywhere. Woe unto you, O you who are neglectful of Him! You must not be distracted from Him by seeking anything but Him. How often you ask Him to provide you with affluence, but this may be a temptation for you, without your realizing it. You do not know the good in anything, so keep silent, conform, and ask Him to grant you contentment with His actions [*af'āl*] and gratitude under all circumstances. Affluent provision is a temptation in the absence of gratitude, while shortage of sustenance is a temptation when patience is lacking. Gratitude will bring you more blessings and draw you closer to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), while patience will put your heart on a firm footing, give it support and assistance, and help it to succeed. It will then have a praiseworthy outcome in this world and the hereafter. Resistance to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is unlawful [*ḥarām*]; it darkens the heart and the face.

Woe unto you! O ignorant one, instead of letting your lower self [*nafs*] work in opposition, you should keep it busy pleading with the Lord of

Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Keep it preoccupied with this, until the times of tribulation are over and the fires of misfortune are extinguished. O you who claim to seek the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), where do you stand in relation to one who is familiar with the treasure houses of His mercy [*rahma*] and His love [*maḥabba*]? So plead with Him when you are on the road, before attaining to Him. When you are perplexed, say: “O Guide of the perplexed, guide me!” When you are put to the test and incapable of patience, say: “My God [*Ilāhī*], help me, give me patience and grant me relief!” As for when you have arrived, and your heart is admitted to His presence and drawn near to Him, there is then no need to ask, no use for the tongue, but only silence and witnessing. You become a guest, and the guest does not express his own wishes. He behaves with good manners, eats what he is offered and accepts what he is given, unless he is told to say what he would like, in which case he makes his wishes known, in obedience to an order, not of his own volition. Asking is appropriate when one is at a distance, and silence when one is near.

The people [of the Lord] are acquainted with none but the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Influential people [*arbāb*] have lost all connection with them, and material concerns [*asbāb*] have been discarded from their hearts. Even if they are deprived of food and drink for days or months, they do not care and remain unaffected, because the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is their Sustainer [*Mughadhdhī*] and He gives them whatever nourishment He wishes.

If someone claims to love Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then seeks from Him something other than Himself, he is lying about his love for Him. As for one who has come to be loved [*maḥbūb*], who has arrived as a guest and been drawn near, he is told: “Ask, express your desires and say what you wish to have, for you are empowered.” The lover [*muḥibb*] is constrained, while the beloved [*maḥbūb*] is at ease. Deprivation for the lover, and gifts for the beloved. The servant continues to be a lover, for he is in a state of bewilderment [*hayamān*], separation and fragmentation, and of having to earn for the sake of nourishment. Then, when the transformation occurs and he comes to be a beloved, the state of affairs is completely changed as far as he is concerned. He receives affectionate attention, comfort, ease, affluent provision and control over creatures. All of this comes by virtue of his patience and

steadfastness in his state of love. The servant's friendship [*ṣuhba*] is for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and the love [*maḥabba*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for His servant is not like the love of one creature for another. As for our Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He):

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (42:11)

Our Lord, provide allegories for the sake of human beings! From Him you must seek understanding of Him. From Him you must seek the delight of hearts in His company, for He extends the hearts' delight to whomever He will. He multiplies the sustenance of hearts for whomever He will. The heart of one of these people [of the Lord] embraces all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth. His heart comes to resemble the staff of Moses (peace be upon him). The staff of Moses started out as wisdom [*ḥikma*], then it became power [*qudra*]. It used to carry his traveling provisions when he could not carry them himself, and he used it as a riding mount when he was incapable of walking. It would protect him from harm while he was sitting or asleep. It would produce all kinds of fruit for him, and provide him with shade while he was resting. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) showed him His power in it, so he became familiar with the [divine] power by means of the staff. Then, when He made him a Prophet [*nabī*], drew him close, spoke to him and charged him with responsibility, He said to him:

And what is that in your right hand, O Moses? He said: This is my staff on which I lean, and with which I beat down branches for my sheep, and in which I find other uses. (20:17,18)

Then He said to him: "Throw it down, O Moses!" So he threw it down, and it turned into a enormous serpent, from which he ran away. Then the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) said to him:

Grasp it and fear not. We shall return it to its former state. (20:21)

The purpose of this was to give him a demonstration of the divine power, so as to make the dominion of Pharaoh seem trivial in his eyes, and to teach him to wage war on Pharaoh and his people. It prepared him to fight them and made him aware of miracles [*kharq al-ʿādāt*]. At the outset, he was constricted in the heart and the breast, then He made his heart wide and gave him the law [*ḥukm*], Prophethood [*inubuwwa*] and knowledge [*ʿilm*]. O ignorant one, who forgets this

power and disobeys, do not forget the One who does not forget you! Do not be heedless of the One who is never heedless of you! Remember death, for the Angel of Death [*malak al-mawt*] is entrusted with your spirits [*arwāh*]. Do not be deluded by your youth, your property and everything you have around you. All that you now have around you will soon be taken from you, and you will recall how you squandered and wasted these days in futile pursuits. You will feel remorse, but remorse will do you no good. Soon you will die. You will recall my words and the wise advice I gave you, and in your grave you will wish you were with me and taking instruction from me. Try hard to accept my words and to put them into practice, so that you may be with me in this world and the hereafter. Think well of me, so that you may derive benefit from my words. You must think well of others, but have a poor opinion of yourself. If you do this, you will benefit and others will benefit by you. As long as you are with anyone but Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you are in the midst of sorrow and care, idolatry [*shirk*] and burdens. You must take your heart away from creatures and establish a connection with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you will see that which no eye ever saw, which no ear ever heard of, and which never occurred to any human heart.

What you are now involved in is not correct, and it will not come to completion, because its foundation is unstable. It is not firmly established. It is a garbage dump, and it has been built on a hill. You must repent to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and beg Him to change your present state and your habit of seeking this world and turning away from the hereafter.

Woe unto you! Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has chosen poverty for you, but you wish for wealth! Do you not realize that He is choosing for your sake, and you are disapproving? What disapproves of His choice is nothing but your lower self [*nafs*], your passions [*hawā*], your natural inclination [*tab'*], your devil [*shaitān*] and your bad companions. All of these disapprove of the choice made by Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so you must not go along with them. Pay no attention to them, their recalcitrance and their displeasure with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must listen to what the

heart and the innermost being [*sirr*] are telling you to do, for they are commanding what is good and forbidding what is evil. You must be content with your poverty, for your willingness to accept it actually constitutes wealth.

Your powerlessness is a kind of protection, because if He empowered you, the probable and most likely outcome would be that you would perish through disobeying Him, while if He makes you poor and incapable, it is probable and most likely that He will keep you safe from sins of disobedience. If you are patient with His choice, you will have with Him a reward such as neither you nor anyone on earth could calculate. You are impatient, and the impatient person never succeeds in getting anything he wants. Haste is from the devil, while an unhurried pace [*tu'ada*] is from the All-Merciful [*ar-Raḥmān*]. If you are hasty, you are one of the soldiers of Satan and in his company, while if you are slow but sure, well behaved and patient, you are one of the soldiers of the All-Merciful and in His company.

The reality [*ḥaqīqa*] of pious devotion [*taqwā*] is doing what Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has commanded you to do, forsaking what He has forbidden you to do, and being patient with His workings [*af'āl*], His decrees of destiny [*maqdūrāt*] and all the rest of His trials and tribulations. You are total creature, total self, total passion, total slander, total impulse. You do not have a clue about Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and those who really know Him [*al-ʿārifūn*]. You are all insane in relation to them, for they are the sane ones. When the madness [*junūn*] of the madman [*majnūn*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is complete, the time has come for him to leave madness behind. There is movement at the beginning and stillness at the end. The sickness departs and wisdom follows in its wake.

O young man! You are empty of the hereafter and full of this world. Your condition grieves me, as I am grieved by your separation from the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] and the saints [*awliyāʾ*], and by the way you avoid their company and find satisfaction in your own whimsical ideas. Do you not realize that those who are satisfied with their personal opinions are sure to go astray? There is no one so learned that he does not need more knowledge. There is no scholar who cannot find another more learned than himself. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And of knowledge you have been given only a little. (17:85)

You must stay with the broad mass [*jumhūr*]. Stay with the great majority [*as-sawād al-a‘ẓam*]. Stick to the highroad [*jādda*]. You must stay the course and stop splitting off, in order to follow the path to the end. [As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:]

Follow [the Book and the Sunna], and do not introduce heretical innovations, for you have been given everything you need.

This path is not traveled in company with the lower self [*nafs*] and the passions [*hawā*], but rather with the rule of law [*ḥukm*] and the practice thereof, the abandonment of one’s own power and strength, patient endurance, the acceptance of submissive obedience [*istislām*] and resignation, the forsaking of haste and the adoption of a steady pace. This is not something you can get in a hurry. It requires proper preparations [*ḥibāl wa-riḥāl*; “ropes and camel-saddles”], patience, effort and striving, and that you have the companionship of one of the kings of knowledge [*mulūk al-ma‘rifa*] to guide you, instruct you and relieve you of your burden. You must walk in his train, then when you are exhausted he will give orders for you to be carried, or let you ride behind him. If you are a lover [*muḥibb*], he will let you ride behind him, and if you are a beloved [*maḥbūb*], he will mount you in his saddle while he rides behind you. Anyone who has tasted this will know it from experience. To be in the company of truly competent people [*ahl al-ahliyya*] is a blessing [*ni‘ma*], while being with liars and hypocrites is a curse [*niqma*].

You must practice vigilant awareness of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and oblige your lower self [*nafs*] to observe the rights [*ḥuqūq*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His creatures. If you wish for all that is good in this world and the hereafter, you must be keenly aware of the fact that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) knows all about you. You must oblige your lower self to work. You must oblige it to carry out the commandments of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and forbid it to commit sins against Him. You must train it to endure with patience when misfortunes come your way, to be ready to accept the [divine] judgements and decrees when they come, and to be grateful when blessings arrive. If you do this, the obstacles will disappear from your path. You will be guaranteed the companionship of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will meet the Escort [*rafiq*] on the road and you will meet the Helper [*mu‘īn*]. You will find the Treasure [*kanz*] that will follow you whichever way you turn. You need

not worry about where you are, or where you have stopped, because wherever you alight you will glean [*ainamā saqaṭṭa laqaṭṭa*]. You will have at your service the law [*ḥukm*], knowledge [*ʿilm*], destiny [*qadar*], humans [*ins*], jinn and angels. All things will fear you, because of your fear of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and all things will obey you, because of your obedience to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). When someone fears Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), all things are afraid of him, and when someone does not fear Him, He makes that person afraid of everything. When someone serves Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), He makes everything serve him, because He does not allow one atom of the work of any servant of His to go to waste.

As you pay allegiance, so shall allegiance be paid to you. According to how you are, so shall you be treated.

O Allāh, treat us with Your generosity, Your beneficence, Your tolerance and Your grace, in this world and the hereafter, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Fifty-sixth Discourse

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 19th of Ramaḍān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

O young man! I see that your behavior is not the behavior characteristic of those who are vigilantly aware of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and fearful of Him. You maintain close relations with evil and corrupt people, and avoid the company of the saints [*awliyāʾ*] and the pure [*aṣfiyāʾ*]. You have emptied your heart of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and filled it with the enjoyment of this world, its people and its vanities. Do you not realize that fear acts as a custodian in the heart, providing it with light and clarity and explanations? If you carry on like this, you will forfeit salvation [*salāma*] in this world and the hereafter. If you would remember death, your enjoyment of this world would diminish and your abstinence from it would increase. When our end is death, how can we find happiness in worldly things? As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Every runner has a goal, and the goal of every living being is death.

Death is the end of sorrows and of joys, of wealth and poverty, of hardship and ease, of sickness and pain. When someone dies, he experiences his resurrection, and what was distant comes to be near as far as he is concerned. All that you are involved in is crazy delusion. You must detach your heart, your secret [*sirr*] and your inner being [*bāṭin*] from all your present involvements. This world is for a finite term, while the hereafter is for an infinite eternity. Your life in this world is for a finite term, while your life in the hereafter is for an infinite eternity.

You must strive to ensure that you are wholly obedience, for if you do this, you will come to belong to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in your entirety. Disobedience is maintaining the existence [*wujūd*]

of the lower self [*nafs*], while obedience is causing its nonexistence [*fuqdān*]. Satisfying the desires of the flesh [*shahawāt*] is maintaining the existence of the lower self, while refraining from them is causing its nonexistence. You must refrain from the desires of the flesh and not satisfy them, except in compliance with the decree of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not of your own volition and craving. Accept such objects of desire with the hand of abstinence, under compulsion and duress. Let the hand of abstinence drag you to accept the object of desire and convey it to the lower self. Abstinence [*zuhd*] is an essential necessity prior to knowledge [*‘ilm*] of your condition [*hāla*]. Abstinence is appropriate in the darkness, and acceptance and enjoyment in the light. This [present condition of yours] is darkness, so when it departs from you, you will see the light. Power [*qudra*] is a state of darkness [*zulma*], while your dependence on the Empowering One [*Muqaddir*] is a state of light [*diyā’*]. Your first stage is a condition of darkness, then, when illumination [*kashf*] comes from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and you are firmly established in His presence, you will reach the stage of light. When the radiance of the moon of knowledge [*ma‘rifā*] comes, it will dispel the darkness of the night of destiny [*qadar*]. With the rising of the sun of knowledge [*‘ilm*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), the decrees of destiny [*aqdār*] and the darkness will disappear altogether. You will see clearly what is around you and what is distant from you. As He makes things plain to you, what was previously obscure to you will come to be obvious. He will enable you to distinguish between the bad and the good, between what belongs to others and what belongs to you. You will differentiate between the wish [*murād*] of creatures and the wish of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will see the door of creatures and the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). There you will see that which no eye has ever seen, which no ear has ever heard of, and which has never occurred to any human heart. Your heart will eat the food of direct witnessing [*mushāhada*], drink the wine of intimate friendship [*uns*], and be invested with the robes of acceptance. Then it will be sent back to the people, for the sake of their welfare and to lead them back from their wandering astray, their desertion of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and their disobedience to Him. It will be sent back together with strong protection, permanent safekeeping and permanent security.

O you who do not understand this and do not believe in it, you are a shell with no kernel, rotten wood that is fit only for the fire, unless you repent, have faith and believe.

O young man! If you repent, have faith and believe, then in your physical constitution [*binya*] you will find well-being, sound health and sweetness, but if you do otherwise, you will find it contains glass that will cut your tongue, your tonsils and your liver. Accept what I have to say, for I am twisting your ropes. Accept, and do not treat me as an enemy, for why should there be any enmity between you and me? I am a mosque [*masjid*] for you to perform your prayers [*ṣalāt*] in, and to remove your impurities and dirt. I tread the path for you, and provide you with food and drink along the way. I do this together with you, and I want no remuneration for it from you. My payment is not your responsibility. My task is to serve those who are seeking the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). If your quest is genuinely for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), then I am employed in your service. When the servant is fully committed to seeking the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), all things are at his disposal.

O young man! You must be your own preacher [*wā'iz*] and not depend on me or on anyone else. My preaching [*wā'iz*] is directed at your outer [*ẓāhir*], while your own preaching is directed at your inner [*bāṭin*]. Admonish yourself to remember death constantly, and to sever all dependent ties and material connections [*asbāb*]. Depend on the Lord of lords [*Rabb al-arbāb*], the Almighty and All-Knowing Creator [*al-Khallāq al-ʿAẓīm al-ʿAlīm*]. Cling to the hem of His mercy [*raḥma*] and rely on His kindness [*raʿfa*]. Let nothing else distract you from Him, for it will screen you from Him.

When one of you succeeds with my help, I feel happy for his sake, and when I tell him something but he does not accept it, I feel sorry for him. The believer [*muʾmin*] comes close to me, while the hypocrite [*munāfiq*] runs away from me. O hypocrites, I concur with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in His anger toward you. He has made me a blazing fire against you. But if you repent, accept what I have to say to you, and bear with patience the harshness of my speech, I shall be coolness and peace for you.

Woe unto you! Have you no sense of shame? Your obedience is external, while your sins of disobedience are internal. You will soon be

seized by the hand of death and disease, then you will be locked up in the prison of the Fire of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). And you, who are deficient in deeds, have you no sense of shame? You are content to spend your days and nights in idleness, yet you want what belongs to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), in spite of your shortcomings. You must set to work and let your lower selves [*nufūs*] become accustomed to it. Everybody gets a shock when he starts out, but you become clear in the end, and murky confusions disappear. When you repent, the process is bound to have a beginning and an end.

O fugitives from the service of your Master [*sayyid*]! O you who prefer your own opinions to the opinion of the pure [*aṣfiyā'*], the Prophets [*anbiyā'*], the Messengers [*mursalūn*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]! O you who put your trust in creatures and not in the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), surely you have heard that the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Cursed is he whose trust lies in a creature like himself.

Do not seek this world and do not get angry over worldly things, because this will spoil your heart, just as vinegar spoils honey.

Woe unto you! You have combined love of this world with arrogant pride [*takabbur*], and the owner of these two vices will not succeed, unless he repents and gives them up. Be sensible! Who are you? What are you? Of what were you created, and for what have you been created? Do not be arrogant, because to be arrogant one must be ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His Messenger and His righteous servants. O you of little understanding, you seek to rise to high rank through arrogance. Try the opposite and you will achieve your goal! For as the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

If someone behaves with humility toward Allāh, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will raise him up, and if someone behaves with arrogant pride, Allāh will abase him.

If someone is content with the hereafter, he will find that he has made the better choice. If someone is content with little, much will come to him. If someone is content with lowliness, honor will come to him. Be content with less, until your condition is transformed. If someone humbly submits to the divine decree [*qadar*] and is content with it, he will be raised up by Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), the One who

has power [*al-Qādir*] over all things. Humility and good behavior will draw you close [to Him], while arrogance and bad conduct will keep you at a distance. Obedience will improve you and bring you close, while disobedience will spoil you and drive you away.

O young man! Do not trade religion [*dīn*] for figs [*tīn*]! Do not trade your religion for the figs of sultans, kings and wealthy people, or for a morsel of forbidden food [*ḥarām*]. If you eat at the expense of your religion, your heart will turn black. And how could it not turn black, when you are worshipping creatures? O wretched failure, if you had any light in your heart you would be able to distinguish between what is unlawful [*ḥarām*], what is legally dubious [*shubha*] and what is indifferently permissible [*mubāh*]; between that which blackens your heart and that which illuminates it; between that which brings your heart near [to your Lord], and that which keeps it at a distance.

O ignorant one, I am familiar only with earning [*kasb*] or total trust [*tawakkul*] in the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Acquiring by earning comes at the beginning of faith [*īmān*], then with strength of faith comes acquisition from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), after the disappearance of intermediaries between you and Him. When the heart becomes strong, acquisition is from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) by way of the hands of creatures, at the command of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). What I mean when I say “the disappearance of intermediaries” is the disappearance of the heart’s attachment to intermediaries and the idolatrous worship [*shirk*] of those who are merely carrying out the commandment of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so that one takes from them but turns a deaf ear to their praise and their blame, their acceptance and their rejection. If they give, one sees the working of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in them, and likewise if they refuse to give.

The people [of the Lord] are deaf, dumb and blind to any but Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). They have only Him as their Supporter [*Nāṣir*] and Deserter [*Khādhil*], their Giver [*Muʿṭī*] and Withholder [*Māniʿ*], their Source of Harm [*Dārr*] and their Source of Benefit [*Nāfiʿ*]. Kernel without shell, purity upon purity, goodness upon goodness—such are they who expel all created beings [*khalāʿiq*] from their hearts.

Nothing remains within them except Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). What remains in them is the silent remembrance [*dhikr khafī*] of Him and of no other. O Allāh, bless us with knowledge [*‘ilm*] of You!

Woe unto you! You imagine you can pass yourself off as genuine. Were it not for the law [*ḥukm*], I would descend upon you, O hypocrite, and expose you to shame. Do not risk your neck with me, for I am not shy of anyone except Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His righteous servants. When the servant really knows Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), creatures fall from his heart and scatter away from it, just as dry leaves scatter from the trees, so that it is left entirely free of creatures. He becomes blind to the sight of them and deaf to the sound of their speech, as far as his heart and his innermost being [*sirr*] are concerned.

When the self [*nafs*] becomes tranquil [*muṭma’inna*], it is entrusted with the safekeeping of the limbs and organs of the body. Then the heart travels to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), to seek what is in His presence. Then it goes to this world, which becomes a manager for the self and looks after its interests. This is the customary procedure of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with respect to those who seek Him. When it is time for them to receive all their allotted shares, this world comes to them in the shape of an ugly, gray-haired old woman, to give them their allotments in full. She is a maidservant, not a concubine [*surriyya*]. They take from her what she has for them, and pay no attention to her.

O young man! You must empty your heart for the sake of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), while keeping your physical body and your lower self [*nafs*] occupied with hard work for your dependents, so that you put His commandments into practice and earn for them through His action [*fi’l*]. To remain silent in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and to refrain with patience and contentment from putting requests to Him, is worthier than supplication [*du‘ā’*], begging [*su‘āl*] and insistent pleading [*ilhāḥ*]. You must erase your own knowledge in favor of His knowledge, set aside your own planning in favor of His planning, cut off your own will in favor of His will, and put your own mind out of the way on the arrival of His judgments [*aqdiyya*] and decrees [*aqdār*]. You must act like this with Him,

if you wish to have Him as Lord [*Rabb*], Helper [*Mu'īn*] and Savior [*Musallim*]. You must be calm in His presence, if you wish to attain to Him.

The believer [*mu'min*] has all his notions [*khawāṭir*] and aspirations [*himam*] united as one. He has nothing left except a notion [*khāṭir*] that occurs [*yakhṭuru*] to his heart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), while he is waiting at the door of his nearness to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then, when his knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of Him is well established, the door is opened in front of him and he passes beyond it, to see that which he could never describe. A notion is for the heart, while an indication [*ishāra*] is secret speech [*kalām khafī*] to the innermost being [*sirr*], when it has transcended one's lower self [*nafs*], passions [*hawā*], blameworthy characteristics [*akhlāq madhmūma*] and all creatures, into well-being, goodness and bliss. One is turned and moved about therein, like the Companions of the Cave [*aṣḥāb al-kahf*], concerning whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And we turned them over to the right, then over to the left. (18:18)

O young man! Hear this, believe this and do not consider it untrue. Do not deprive yourself completely of all that is good.

Fifty-seventh Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 24th of Ramaḍān, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

O young men! Be charitable [*taṣaddaqū*] enough to grant me a grain of honesty [*ṣidq*!] You are under no obligation to me as far as your goods or your household possessions are concerned. I want nothing from you except honesty and sincerity [*ikhlās*], and even this is for your benefit. I want you for your own sakes, not for mine. You must curb the expressions of your outer and inner tongues, for you have supervisors watching over you. The angels are keeping watch over your outer selves [*ẓawāhir*], while the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is keeping watch over your inner beings [*bawāṭin*]. O you who build castles and palaces, while your life is spent on the cultivation of this world! Do not build anything without a righteous intention [*niyya ṣāliha*], for the foundation on which one builds in this world must be righteous intention. You must not build with your lower self [*nafs*] and your passions [*hawā*]. The ignorant person builds in this world with his lower self, his passions, his natural impulses and his habitual inclinations, without reference to the commandment of the law [*ḥukm*] or compliance with the judgment [*qadā'*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and conformity to His action [*fi'l*], so of course he cannot be credited with any righteous intention. He cannot enjoy the use of that which he has built, and someone else will occupy it. On the Day of Resurrection he will be asked: "Why did you build? Where did you get what you spent, and why did you spend it?" He will be called to account for it all.

You must try to achieve contentment and compliance. Be satisfied with your allotted share, and do not try to acquire what has not been allotted to you. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

The harshest of all the punishments that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) inflicts on His servant in this world, is having him go in search of that which has not been allotted to him.

The Shaikh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) went on to say:

You come to me, but you do not have a good opinion of me, so you cannot profit from my words.

Woe unto you! You claim to be a Muslim, yet you are antagonistic toward Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His righteous servants, so you must be lying when you make such a claim. Islām is derived from *istislām* [submissive obedience] to the judgment and decree of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and means being content to accept His workings [*afʿāl*], while observing the rules [*ḥudūd*] laid down by His Book and the Sunna of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). Only then can your Islām be genuine.

The unfortunate thing about entertaining expectations [*ṭūl al-amal*] is that this is what makes you fall into sins of disobedience and opposition to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Good will come to you whenever you curtail your expectations, so make a practice of doing so, if you wish for success [*ḥalāl*]. Whatever comes to the Muslim from destiny [*qadar*], he accepts it from its hand and is content with it, while readily complying with the sacred law [*sharʿ*]. He has no lower self, no passion, no natural impulse and no devil. I mean, he receives assistance against them. Not so in your case! You are lacking in every respect. We have no one immune to sin [*maʿṣūm*] since the passing of the Prophets (peace be upon them). The lower self [*nafs*] of such a person is tranquil [*muṭmaʿinna*], his passions [*hawā*] have been subdued, the turmoil of his natural urges [*ṭabʿ*] has been stilled, and his devil has been imprisoned, so it gets nothing from him and finds no access to him.

In total trust [*tawakkul*] there is no attachment to material means [*ṣabab*], and in the affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] there is no question of regarding anybody as the source of harm or benefit. You are total self [*nafs kullīyya*], total passion [*hawā kullī*], total habit [*ʿāda kullīyya*]. You do not have a clue about total trust and the affirmation of Unity.

Bitterness then sweetness; then breaking then mending; then death then everlasting life. Humiliation then honor. Poverty then wealth.

Ceasing to exist [*in'idām*] then being brought into existence [*ijād*] through Him, for sure. If you endure all this with patience, you will truly obtain what you wish from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Otherwise, nothing will come true for you. Anything that distracts you from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is unfortunate for you, even if it is fasting [*sawm*] and prayer [*ṣalāt*] beyond the performance of obligatory religious duties [*farā'id*] and those recommended by the Sunna. If you keep the fast to the extent that it is an obligatory duty [*fard*], then afterwards the hunger and thirst experienced in supererogatory [*nāfila*] fasting distracts you from keeping your heart in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), from remaining vigilantly aware of Him, from living comfortably through Him and in His company, and from nearness to Him, then you are the servant of the obstacle [*'abd al-ḥijāb*], the servant of creatures, of your lower self and of your passions. The knower [*'ārif*] stays with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) beneath the banner [*liwā'*] of His nearness, together with His knowledge [*'ilm*] and His secret [*sirr*], and he moves in accordance with His judgment and His decree. When he is incapable of action, he is turned without making himself turn, moved without making himself move, and brought to rest without bringing himself to rest. He comes to be numbered among those concerning whom Allāh has said:

And We turned them over to the right, then over to the left. (18:18)

When incapacity came from them they were caused to move. Movement occurs when the power [*qudra*] is present, while stillness and surrender [*taslīm*] come with incapacity. There is movement when you are in existence [*wujūd*], and stillness when you are in nonexistence [*faqd*]. There is movement in the law [*ḥukm*] and stillness in knowledge [*'ilm*]. You will become your true self only after you have withdrawn from the lower self [*nafs*], passion [*hawā'*], natural inclination [*ṭab'*] and creatures altogether. You must not become attached to creatures, for no one is capable of causing you harm, bringing you benefit or providing you with sustenance, other than your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must always be in obedience to Him and to His commandments and prohibitions.

Let nothing remain in your hand, apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you will become the richest and noblest of

creatures, for you will come to be like Adam (peace be upon him), commanding things to bow down in prostration before him. A person like this is beyond the minds of people, of all the common folk [*‘awāmm*] and many of the élite [*khawāṣṣ*], for he is a particle of Adam, from his very essence [*lubb*].

O you who have little knowledge, you must study [*tafaqqah*] and then seek seclusion. The people [of the Lord] have studied, then secluded themselves from creatures with their hearts [*qulūb*]. Their outer selves [*ẓawāhir*] are in the company of creatures for the sake of improving people, while their inner beings [*bawāṭin*] are together with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in His service and His fellowship. Thus they are both existent [*kā’inūn*] and remote [*nā’ūn*]*—existent in the company of creatures in accordance with the law* [*ḥukm*], but remote from them with their hearts. Their hearts are remote, secluded from things altogether. Their concern in the outer [*ẓāhir*] is observance of the rules of law [*aḥkām al-ḥukm*]. Whenever their clothes get dirty, they wash them and freshen them with perfume and incense. Whenever they get torn, they patch and stitch the holes. They are the heads of the people. An atom of them is like the towering mountains. Their hearts are together with their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), prostrate before Him, vigilantly aware of Him, immersed in His knowledge [*‘ilm*].

O Allāh, let our nourishment be Your remembrance and let our wealth be Your nearness. Āmīn.

You are dead at heart, and your companions are also the dead at heart. You need those who are alive, the noble ones, the deputies [*budalā’*]. You are a tomb, coming to a tomb like you; a corpse, coming to a corpse like you. You are an invalid, led by an invalid like you; a blind man, led by a blind man like you.

You must make friends with the believers [*mu’minūn*], the convinced [*mūqinūn*], the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]. Listen patiently to what they have to say, take instruction from it and put it into practice, then you will prosper. You must hear the words of the Shaikhs and put them into practice. You must have respect for them, if you wish for success [*ḥalāl*]. I once had a Shaikh. Whenever I had a problem and it weighed upon my heart, he would talk to me about it without requiring me to say

anything. This was due to my respect for him and my good behavior in his company. I never behaved in the company of the Shaikhs with anything but respectfulness and good manners.

The Şūfī cannot be stingy, because he has nothing left to be stingy with, since he claims to have renounced everything. If he is given something, he accepts it on behalf of someone else, not on his own behalf. His heart has become pure, free from all things existing [*mawjūdāt*] and formed [*muṣawwarāt*]. To be stingy one must have possessions, but where the Şūfī is concerned all things have become the property of others, so how can he be stingy with what belongs to someone else? He has neither enemy nor friend, and he pays no attention to either praise or blame. He does not recognize giving and withholding, harm and benefit, as being from any other than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is not happy about life and he is not sad about death. Death for him is the displeasure of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and life for him is enjoying His good pleasure. Loneliness for him is being in a crowd, while intimate friendship [*uns*] is being in seclusion. His food is the remembrance [*dhikr*] of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and his drink is from the wine of intimate friendship with Him. He certainly cannot be stingy with the vain trifles of this lower world and what it contains, because he has wealth transcending it altogether.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201).

Fifty-eighth Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 1st of Shawwāl, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

You acquire so much knowledge, but do not put it into practice! Close the record book [*dīwān*] of learning [*‘ilm*] and spread out the record book of practice [*‘amal*] with sincerity [*ikhhlās*], otherwise you will have no success. While you are merely acquiring knowledge, you show an impudent attitude toward the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) by your actions. You have cast off the cloak of modesty from your eyes, and have treated Him as the most insignificant of those who are watching you. You accept in accordance with your passions [*hawā*], reject according to your passions and are motivated by your passions, so you will surely be destroyed by your passions. You should feel a sense of shame before Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances, and must act in accordance with His law [*ḥukm*]. If you practice the outer aspect [*ẓāhir*] of the law, that practice will bring you closer to the knowledge [*‘ilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O Allāh, rouse us from the slumber of the heedless! Āmīn.

When you commit sins, afflictions come and fall upon you, but if you repent, seek forgiveness of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and turn to Him for help, they will fall around you. You are bound to experience some tribulation, so you must ask Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to let it be accompanied by patience and compliance, so that what is between you and Him may be unimpaired. The scratch marks will then be on the external form [*qālab*], not the heart [*qalb*], on the outer [*ẓāhir*] and not the inner [*bāṭin*], on property and not on religion [*dīn*]. The trial will thus prove to be a blessing [*ni‘ma*] and not a curse [*niqma*].

O hypocrite [*munāfiq*], you have been satisfied to let your obedience to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger be nominal and not meaningful. Such is your falsehood both outwardly and inwardly, so you are surely to be despised in both this world and the hereafter. The disobedient sinner is despicable within himself, and the liar is despicable within himself. O learned one, do not dirty your knowledge in the presence of the sons of this world. Do not trade something noble for something worthy of contempt. The noble thing is knowledge, and the contemptible thing is the stuff of this world that they hold in their hands. Creatures are unable to give you that which has not been assigned to your lot. It is only your allotted share [*qism*] that passes through their hands, so if you are patient your share will come to you by way of their hands, and you will keep your dignity.

Woe unto you! Those who must be sustained do not provide sustenance. Those who must receive do not give. Devote yourself to the obedient service of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and stop plying Him with requests, for He does not need you to inform Him and make Him aware of what is in your best interests. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in one of His utterances:

If someone is too busy remembering Me to ask me for anything, to him I shall give the very best of what I give to those who ask.

As for remembrance [*dhikr*] by the tongue without the heart, there is no honor or dignity for you in that. Remembrance means remembrance by the heart and the innermost being [*sirr*], and only then remembrance by the tongue. When the servant's remembrance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is as it should be, the Lord of Truth will remember him, as He has said:

So remember Me, and I will remember you. Be thankful to Me, and be not ungrateful toward Me. (2:152)

You must remember Him so that He will remember you. Remember Him until remembrance relieves you of your heavy loads, leaving you free from any burden of sin, so that you become obedience with no disobedience, for then He will remember you among those whom He remembers. You must therefore be preoccupied with Him to the exclusion of His creatures, and be too busy remembering Him to ask Him for anything. He must become your whole objective, so that you

are distracted from all your other goals. When He has become your whole aim and purpose, He will put the keys to the treasure houses of sovereignty into the hand of your heart.

When someone loves Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), that person can love no one but Him. He removes from your heart the love of all that is apart from Him. When the love of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) takes control of a servant's heart, the love of all others departs from his heart. Have you no mind with which to consider and understand? Have you never been in the presence of someone at the moment of death? Your turn will come, and the Angel of Death will knock on the door of your life. He will snatch that life away and part you from your family and your loved ones. You must try not to be taken while you are reluctant to meet Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must forward your goods to the hereafter and wait for death, for in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) you will see something better than anything you have seen in this lower world.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

Fifty-ninth Discourse

It was on Friday, the 9th of Rajab, A.H. 546, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion:

The speech of one who is greedy with ambition is not free from confusion and dissimulation. He is incapable of presenting the truth. His speech is an empty shell with no kernel [*lubb*] inside it, just outer form with no inner content. One who is greedily ambitious [*tāmi'*] is empty like greedy ambition [*tama'*] itself, because all the consonant letters in [the Arabic word] *tama'* are empty—the *tā'*, the *mīm* and the *'ain* [all have a hollow shape as they are written in the Arabic script].

O servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), be truthful and you will prosper. The aspiration of the truthful person [*ṣādiq*] rises sky-high. He is not badly affected by anything anyone may say. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is in control of his affairs. If He wants him for some business, He will make him ready for it.

Something that was said arose from bad manners, and this is the response to it. The honesty [*ṣidq*] of your spiritual states will induce me to speak, while your dishonesty will make me fall silent. To the extent that you will buy, I am selling.

O young man! If you were in possession of the fruit of knowledge [*'ilm*] and its blessed grace [*baraka*], you would not go running to the doors of potentates [*salāṭīn*] in order to indulge your lower self [*nafs*] and its desires. The learned person [*'ālim*] has no legs on which to run to the doors of creatures. The abstinent person [*zāhid*] has no hands with which to take people's goods. The lover [*muḥibb*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has no eyes with which to look at any other than Him. Even if he were to meet all the creatures there are, the lover who is sincere [*ṣādiq*] in his love would take no pleasure in looking at them. He looks at no one but his Beloved [*maḥbūb*]. This world does not seem

important to the eyes in his head, the hereafter does not seem important to the eyes of his heart, and to the eyes of his innermost being [*sirr*] nothing seems important but the Master [*Mawlā*].

Be sensible! You are getting nowhere. Most of you will follow anyone who makes a noise or clamor. What most speakers have to say comes from their tongues, not from their hearts. The noises made by the hypocrite [*munāfiq*] come from his tongue and his head, while the noises made by the honest person come from his heart and his innermost being [*sirr*]. His heart is at the door of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), while his innermost being is entering His presence. He goes on shouting at the door until he enters the house. You are a liar, by Allāh, under all circumstances! You do not recognize the path to the door of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so how can you point it out? You are blind, so how can you guide others? You have been blinded by your passions [*hawā*] and your natural inclinations [*tab'*], by following your lower self [*nafs*] and by your love of this world, your prominent position and your desires.

Come closer to me, while sins of disobedience [*ma'āsī*] are still on your outer being [*ẓāhir*], before they reach your heart and so become persistent. That persistence will then go further and develop into unbelief [*kufr*].

When someone's obedience and servitude [*'ubūdiyya*] to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) are truly confirmed, that person will be able to hear His speech.

He mentioned the seventy who were chosen from the people of Moses (peace be upon him) to hear the speech [of the Lord], and said:

So the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) addressed them and they were all thunderstruck, while Moses (peace be upon him) alone remained conscious. When Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) revived them, they said: "We have no capacity for hearing the speech of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so you must be the mediator between us and Him." Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) then spoke to Moses (peace be upon him), while he recited to them and repeated His words to them. He was capable of hearing His speech only because of the strength of his faith [*īmān*] and the realization [*tahqiq*] of his

obedience and his servitude, while they were incapable of paying attention to him because of the weakness of their faith. If they had accepted from him what he brought them in the Torah, obeyed him in respect of the [divine] commandments and prohibitions, learned to behave properly and not been so hasty in what they said, they would have been able to hear the speech of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also went on to say:

I am surely empowered against every liar, hypocrite and imposter [*dajjāl*]; empowered against everyone who is disobedient to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The greatest of them is Iblīs and the least of them is the immoral sinner [*fāsiq*]. I am surely at war with every misguided person who leads others astray, summoning them to falsehood [*bāṭil*]. In this I turn for help to “There is no power and no strength except through Allāh, the High, the Almighty [*lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi’llāhi*]’-‘*aliyyi*’-‘*aẓīm*].”

Hypocrisy [*nifāq*] has taken hold upon your heart. You need Islām, repentance [*tawba*] and putting an end to pretense [*riyā*’].

If this that I am engaged in is from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), it will increase, multiply and become great. It will stand on its own two feet and with its own pair of wings it will fly to people’s roofs and enter their houses, and they will see it with the eyes of their hearts. If it is from my lower self [*nafs*], my passions [*hawā*], my natural impulses [*ṭab*’], my devil [*shaitān*] and my vanity [*bāṭil*], then off and away with it! It will soon diminish, dissolve, undergo transformation, scatter and come to an end, because the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will not assist a liar or support a hypocrite. He will not give to a denier [*jāhid*] nor will He grant more to one who fails to offer thanks. Nothing will come of anyone who persuades himself to accept any kind of hypocrisy; no indeed, his hypocrisy will cause his religion [*dīn*] to be consumed by fire.

O pupils [*murīdūn*], I have spoken out, but you are running away and not practicing! My name in other countries is *Akhras* [dumb, mute]. I used to pretend to be crazy, dumb, or unable to speak Arabic, but it was not correct for me. Destiny [*qadar*] brought me out here to you. I was

in the underground storage bins, when it pulled me out and made me sit on the lecture seat.

You must not lie, for you do not have two hearts; no, it is one single heart, and when it is filled with one thing it cannot contain something else. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh has not assigned to any man two hearts within his body. (33:4)

A heart that loves both the Creator and creatures is unsound. A heart that contains both this world and the hereafter is unsound. If the heart belongs to the Creator and the face is turned toward creatures, this is permissible. It is permissible to direct one's attention toward creatures in order to look after their best interests out of compassion for them. One who is in ignorance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) may put on a show and act hypocritically, but one who has knowledge of Him [*‘ālim bihi*] will not behave like this. The stupid fool may disobey Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), but the intelligent person will obey Him. One who is eager to amass worldly things may put on a show and behave hypocritically, but one who has few expectations will not act in this fashion.

The believer [*mu'min*] draws close to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) by performing the obligatory religious duties [*farā'id*], and shows his love for Him through supererogatory acts of devotion [*nawāfil*]. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has some servants for whom there is no such thing as supererogatory devotions. They discharge the obligatory duties, then perform those that are [strictly speaking] supererogatory, saying: "These are obligatory duties for us, by virtue of the fact that we are capable of doing them. That we should be preoccupied with worshipful service [*ibāda*], always and forever, is compulsory [*farḍ*] for us." They do not consider any act of devotion as supererogatory as far as they themselves are concerned.

The saints [*awliyā'*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) have an awakener to awaken them and a teacher to teach them. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) equips them with the means to acquire knowledge. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Even if the believer [*mu'min*] were to be on a mountain peak, Allāh would provide him with a teacher to teach him.

Do not borrow the words of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] and then utter them pretending that they are your own! The borrowing will not be concealed. You must clothe yourself from what belongs to you, not from something borrowed. Plant the cotton with your own hand, water it with your own hand and cultivate it with your own effort, then weave it, sew it and wear it. Do not be happy with someone else's property and someone else's clothes. If you take another person's words and utter them, pretending they are your own, the hearts of the righteous will despise you. If you have no deed to show for yourself, you have nothing to say. The crux of the whole matter is actual practice [*ʿamal*]. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Enter the Garden [of Paradise] because of what you used to do. (16:32)

You must exert yourselves to obtain experience [*maʿrifā*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), for it is kept hidden [*ghaiba*] with Him and resides with His destiny [*qadar*], His power [*qudra*] and His knowledge [*ʿilm*]. It is total annihilation [*fanāʾ*] in His workings [*afʿāl*] and His affairs [*qadāyā*].

Your speech is indicative of what is in your heart. The tongue is the heart's interpreter, so if the heart is mixed, what is said will sometimes be correct and sometimes invalid; there will be times when you are incapable of expressing something properly, and others when you can do so. When the heart stops causing it to be confused, the tongue will function properly. When the heart ceases to be guilty of idolatry [*shirk*], the tongue will report correctly, but when it has an idolatrous attachment to creatures, the tongue will keep changing, altering, stammering and telling lies. There are some speakers who speak from the heart, there are some who speak from their innermost being [*sirr*], and then there are those who speak from the lower self [*nafs*], from their passions [*hawā*], their devil [*shaiṭān*] and their habitual custom [*ʿāda*].

O Allāh, make us believers [*muʾminūn*] and do not make us hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*]!

When you happen to feel love for one person and hatred for another, you must neither love the former nor hate the latter because of your lower self [*nafs*] and your natural inclination [*ṭabʿ*]. You must rather judge between the two of them on the basis of the Book and the Sunna.

Then, if these criteria are favorable to the one whom you have regarded with affection, you must continue to feel that affection, but if they are unfavorable, you must abandon the affectionate feeling. If they prove favorable to the one you disliked, however, you must give up the feeling of hate, while if they are unfavorable you must continue to hate the person. Should this procedure fail to be useful to you, so that you do not get a clear result, you must consult the hearts of the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*] and ask them about the two people concerned. Consult their hearts, for they are sound, because when the heart is sound it is the nearest of things to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). When the heart acts in accordance with the Book and the Sunna, it draws near [to Allāh], and when it draws near it learns and sees what it has to its credit and what it has against it, what is due to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and what is due to others, what is due to the truth and what is due to falsehood. Since the believer [*mu'min*] has a light to see by, how could it be otherwise for the champion of truth [*ṣiddiq*] and the one brought near [*muqarrab*]? The believer has a light by which he can see, and this is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has warned us to beware of his gaze, for he said:

Beware of the penetrating insight [*firāsa*] of the believer, for he sees by the light of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The knower [*ʿarif*] brought near [to Allāh] is also given a light by which he can see how near he is to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and can see the nearness of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) to his heart. He can see the spirits [*arwāḥ*] of the angels [*malā'ika*] and the Prophets [*nabiyyūn*], and the hearts and spirits of the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*]. He can see their spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] and stations [*maqāmāt*]. All of this is in the deepest folds of his heart [*suwaidā' qalbihi*] and the pure clarity [*ṣafā'*] of his innermost being [*sirr*]. He is always in blissful happiness with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is a mediator, receiving from Him and distributing to the people.

There are those who are erudite [*ʿalīm*] with both tongue and heart, while some are erudite at heart but clumsy with the tongue. As for the hypocrite, he is clever with the tongue but incoherent at heart. All his erudition is in his tongue, and this is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

What I fear most of all for my Community [*umma*] is a hypocrite with a clever tongue.

You must not let yourself be dazzled by anything, for Allāh is “Doer of what He will” (11:107). This is why the story is told about a certain righteous man and how he once paid a visit to his brother in Allāh (Exalted is He). “O my brother,” he said to him, “come, let us weep over Allāh’s foreknowledge [*‘ilm*] about us!” How excellent is the saying of this righteous man [*ṣālih*]! He was one who had experience [*‘arīf*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and who had heard the words of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

One of you may act in accordance with the practice of the people of the Garden [of Paradise], until nothing remains between him and it but the distance of a cubit or a span, then misfortune overtakes him and he becomes one of the people of the Fire [of Hell]. And one of you may act in accordance with the practice of the people of the Fire, until nothing remains between him and it but a cubit or a span, then good fortune befalls him and he becomes one of the people of the Garden.

A certain righteous man was asked: “Have you seen your Lord?” He replied: “If I had not seen Him, I would be at my wit’s end.” If someone should say: “How can you see Him?” I would say: “When creatures have departed from the servant’s heart and nothing is left in it apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will let him see and draw him as close as He will. He will let him see inwardly [*bāṭinan*], as He lets others see outwardly [*ẓāhiran*]. He will let him see as He showed Himself to our Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace) on the Night of the Heavenly Ascension [*mi’rāj*], just as He shows Himself to this servant, draws him near and talks to him in his sleep. Sometimes his heart will tell him in a moment of wakefulness to close the eyes of his physical being, so he sees Him with his inner eyes, just as he is accustomed to seeing things on the outside [*ẓāhir*]. He gives him a different inner content [*ma’ nā*], so he can see Him with it; he sees His nearness; he sees His attributes [*ṣifāt*]; he sees His miracles [*karāmāt*], His grace and beneficence and kindness toward him; he sees His bountiful goodness and His protecting wing.”

When a person’s servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*] and direct experience [*ma’ rifa*] are fully realized, he will say neither “Let me see” nor “Do not let me see”; neither “Give me” nor “Do not give me.” He becomes nonexistent [*fānī*], wholly absorbed [*mustaghriq*]. This is why one of those who have

attained to this station [*maqām*] says: “What do I care about me?” Well spoken indeed! I am His slave [*abd*], and the slave in His master’s company has neither choice nor will of his own.

A man once bought a slave [*mamlūk*], and that slave happened to be one of the people of religion [*dīn*] and righteousness [*ṣalāh*].

“O slave,” the man said to him, “what would you like to eat?”

“Whatever you give me to eat.”

“What kind of clothes would you like to wear?”

“Whatever you give me to wear.”

“Where would you like to lodge in my house?”

“In whatever place you lodge me.”

“What jobs would you prefer to work at?”

“Whatever you order me to do.”

The man then burst into tears, as he said: “What a blessing it would be for me, if I could be with my Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) as you are with me!”

“O my master,” said the slave, “does the servant [*abd*] in the company of his master [*sayyid*] have any will [*irāda*] or choice [*ikhtiyār*] of his own?”

Then the master said to him: “You are a free man [*ḥurr*] for the sake of Allāh, and I would like you to stay with me, so that I may serve you with my person [*naḥs*] and my property.”

Anyone who really knows [*ʿarafa*] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is left with no will or choice of his own, and he says: “What do I care about me?” You must not challenge destiny [*qadar*] concerning his affairs or the affairs of any other.

Among the servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) there are a few individuals who abstain from the company of creatures and find intimate friendship in places of seclusion [*khalawāt*]. They enjoy such intimacy in reading the Qurʾān and in reading the words of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), so they surely come to have hearts that are very familiar with creatures and close to them, and with which they see their own lower selves [*nufūs*] and the lower selves of other people. Their hearts are sound, so nothing of what you are up to is concealed from them. They can speak about what you are thinking and feeling, and they can tell you about your domestic situations.

Woe unto you! Be sensible! Do not try to compete with the people [of the Lord] in your ignorance. After you have emerged from [the study of] the Book, you will get up and speak to the people. This is a matter that requires proficiency of the outer [*ẓāhir*] and proficiency of the inner [*bāṭin*], then freedom from all attachment. Then it requires that two necessities apply in your case: The first is that there is no one else left in your town, so you speak to the people out of necessity. The other is that you are commanded to speak by the feeling within your heart. You will then advance to this station [*maqām*], in order to bring creatures [*khalq*] back to the Creator [*Khāliq*].

Woe unto you! You claim to be a Ṣūfī, but you are disturbed and confused. The Ṣūfī is one whose inner and outer have been purified [*ṣafā*] by following the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the Sunna of His Messenger. The more his purity [*ṣafā'*] increases, the more he emerges from the ocean of his existence [*wujūd*] and abandons his own will and choice and volition [*mashī'a*] because of the purity of his heart. The foundation of goodness is following the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in his word and his deed. The more the servant's heart is purified, the more he will see the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) in his sleep, commanding him to do something and forbidding him to do something else. The whole of him becomes a heart [*qalb*] and his physical form is separated off. He becomes a secret [*sirr*] with no publicity [*jaḥr*], pure clarity with no muddy confusion. The shell of his outer being withdraws aside from him, and he remains as a kernel [*lubb*] without a shell. He comes to be with the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) as far as his inner content [*ma'nā*] is concerned. His heart is trained with him and in his presence. His hand comes to be in his hand. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is the one to be consulted about Him, as the doorkeeper before His presence.

To extract everything from the heart is to uproot the unshakable mountains. It calls for the pickaxes of strenuous effort and patient endurance of suffering and disastrous events. Do not go looking for that which does not fall into your hands. Good for you if you put into practice this black-on-white, and are Muslims! Good for you, on the Day of Resurrection you will be in the company of the Muslims and not

in the company of the unbelievers [*kāfirūn*]! Congratulations on being lodged in the Garden [of Paradise] or at its gate, and not being among those consigned to the depths [of Hell]! You must be humble and not arrogant. Humility raises up, while arrogance casts down. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

If someone is humble toward Allāh, Allāh will raise him up.

If a person's heart is constant in remembrance [*dhikr*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), he will receive experience [*ma'rifa*], knowledge [*ilm*], realization of the Divine Unity [*tawhīd*], absolute trust [*tawakkul*], and the rejection of everything whatsoever apart from Him. Constant remembrance is the cause of constant good in this world and the hereafter. When a person's heart is sound, remembrance becomes constant within it. It is inscribed all around it and all over it, so his eyes may sleep but his heart will be remembering his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He inherits this from his Prophet (may Allāh the Exalted bless him and give him peace).

A certain righteous man used to force himself to sleep for part of the night, and would get himself ready for it without actually needing to rest. When asked about this, he said: "My heart sees my Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)." He spoke the truth in what he said, because a true dream [*manām ṣādiq*] is an inspiration [*wahy*] from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The delight of his eye [*qurratu 'ainihi*] was in his sleep.

Sixtieth Discourse

It was in the late evening of Tuesday, the 13th of Rajab, A.H. 546, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Part of the excellence of a man's Islām is paying no attention to that which does not concern him.

The more excellent and truly confirmed a person's Islām becomes, the more he devotes his attention to that which concerns him, and avoids getting involved in things that are none of his business. To busy oneself with that which is irrelevant is the distraction of idle fools. Deprived of the good pleasure of his Master [*Mawlā*] is he who fails to put into practice what He commands, and who occupies himself with things he has not been instructed to deal with. This is deprivation its very self, death its very self and banishment its very self.

Your involvement in this world requires that you have a righteous intention [*niyya ṣāliḥa*], otherwise you deserve to be viewed with disgust. You must concentrate first of all on the cleanliness [*tahāra*] of your heart, for this is an obligatory duty [*farīda*]. Then turn your attention to deeper knowledge [*ma'rifā*]. If you miss the root, your preoccupation with the branch will not be accepted of you. There is no benefit in cleanliness of the physical parts of the body combined with defilement of the heart. You must cleanse your physical limbs and organs by following the Sunna, and your heart by putting the Qur'ān into practice. Take care of your heart, so that your physical body will be taken care of. Every vessel exudes its own contents. Whatever is in your heart will ooze out from you through your physical parts.

Be sensible! This is not the behavior of one who believes in death and is convinced of it. This is not the behavior of one who is looking forward

to meeting Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and dreading His reckoning and His interrogation. The sound heart is filled with affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawḥīd*], absolute trust [*tawakkul*], certitude [*yaqīn*], helpful guidance to success [*tawfiq*], knowledge [*ilm*], faith [*īmān*], and nearness [*qurb*] to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He sees all creatures in their essential weakness, lowliness and poverty, yet he will not be arrogant toward a little child amongst them. He becomes like a lion when battle is joined with the unbelievers [*kuffār*] and hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*], out of zeal for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). In His presence he becomes a discarded piece of flesh, and he is meek and humble toward those who are righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] and piously devoted [*muttaqūn wari'ūn*]. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has described the kind of people who have such attributes, for He has said:

Hard against the unbelievers, merciful among themselves. (48:29)

Woe unto you, O heretical innovator [*mubtadi'*]! No one but Allāh is capable of saying: "I am Allāh." Our Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a Speaker [*Mutakallim*], not a dumb mute, and this is why Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has emphasized the point in his speech to Moses, for he said:

And Allāh spoke directly to Moses. (4:164)

He possesses speech [*kalām*] that can be heard and understood. He said to Moses:

O Moses, I am indeed Allāh, Lord of the Worlds. (28:43)

By His words, "I am Allāh," He means to say: "I am not an angel [*malak*], not a genie [*jinnī*] and not a human being [*insī*], but the Lord of the Worlds [*Rabbu'l-ālamīn*]. So Pharaoh was lying when he said: 'I am your Lord the Most High' (79:24), and when he laid claim to divinity [*ilāhiyya*], disregarding Me. I am Allāh, not Pharaoh or any other creature."

When Moses fell into that agony and anguish, his faith [*īmān*] and conviction [*iqān*] showed through. When he fell into the gloom of night and the gloom of sorrow for the wife, on account of the agony she was suffering, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) revealed to him a light, so he said to his habits, his dependants, his strength and his material means:

Stay here awhile, I notice a fire. (28:29)

“I have seen a light. My innermost being [*sirr*], my heart [*qalb*], my inner content [*maʿnā*] and my kernel [*lubb*] have seen a light. My predestined grace [*sābiqa*] and my guidance have come to me. Independence from creatures has come to me. Saintship [*wilāya*] and deputyship [*khilāfa*] have come to me. The root [*aṣl*] has come to me and the branch [*farʿ*] has departed from me. Dominion has come to me and the dread of Pharaoh has gone from me, and the fear has passed over to him.”

He bade his family farewell, committed them to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and moved on, for surely He would appoint a successor to him amongst them.

This is how it is for the believer [*muʾmin*] when Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) draws him close and summons him to the door of His nearness. His heart looks about to right and left, to the back and to the front, and he sees that all avenues are blocked except in the direction of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then he addresses his lower self [*nafs*], his passions [*hawā*], his physical limbs and organs [*jawāriḥ*], his habits [*ʿāda*], his family and everything he has been involved with, saying: “I have spotted the light of nearness to my Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so I am moving on toward it. If I have a return, I shall come back to you.”

He bids farewell to all creatures. He bids farewell to everything produced [*muḥdath*] and everything made [*maṣnūʿ*], and he moves on toward the Maker [*Ṣāniʿ*], for surely the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will take care of his wife and children and all his material means [*asbāb*].

Part of the spiritual condition [*ḥāl*] is kept hidden from those who are remote, but not from those who are near, from those who hate but not from those who love. It is kept hidden from the majority, but not from the few. When this heart is sound and pure, it can hear the call of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) from each of the six directions [right and left, above and below, in front and behind]. It can hear the call of every Prophet [*nabī*], Messenger [*rasūl*], champion of truth [*ṣiddīq*] and saint [*walī*]. At this stage he draws near to Him, so that his life comes to be nearness to Him and his death remoteness from Him. His contentment comes to be in his intimate conversation [*munājāt*] with Him, and he is satisfied with this to the exclusion of everything else. He does not care about the loss of this world. He does not care about hunger and thirst, nakedness and indignity.

The seeker [*murād*] finds contentment in acts of obedience [*tāʿāt*], while the knower [*ʿarīf*], who is sought [*murād*], finds contentment in nearness to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). O you with your affectations, what is this you are up to? This business cannot be achieved through fasting by day and keeping vigil at night, eating rough food and wearing rough clothes, while still being influenced by the lower self [*nafs*], the passions [*hawā*], natural inclinations [*tabʿ*], ignorance and the opinions of other people. Nothing can come about through this. Woe unto you! Be sincere [*akhlīṣ*] and you will be saved [*takhlīṣ*]. Be truthful [*uṣḍuq*] and you will attain your goal, draw close to your aspiration and ascend to the heights. Surrender [*sallim*] and you will be safe and sound [*salimta*]. Be compliant [*wāfiq*] and you will be helped to succeed [*wuffiqta*]. Be content [*irḍa*] and you will be approved of [*ruḍiya ʿanka*]. You must make a start, then the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will bring things to completion for you.

O Allāh, take care of our affairs in this world and the hereafter. Do not entrust us to our own lower selves [*nufūs*], nor to any of Your creatures!

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say to Gabriel: “Put such and such a person to sleep, and make so and so get up.”

There are two ways of taking this [the first being]: “Make a certain person—the lover [*muḥibb*]—get up, and put another person—the beloved [*maḥbūb*]—to sleep. The former has claimed that he loves Me, so I must certainly examine him and put him in his proper place, until the leaves of his being with any but Me fall from him. Make him get up, until the proof of his claim is established, until his love is confirmed. And put a certain other person to sleep, because he is My beloved. He has long been toiling hard. Not a trace is left with him of any other than Me. His love for Me has become single, and confirmed are his claim, his proof and his fulfillment of My covenant. It is now My turn to fulfill his covenant. He is a guest, and the guest is not made to serve and toil. I shall let him sleep in the chamber of My tender care, and I shall let him sit at the table of My gracious favor. I shall entertain him in My nearness and I shall remove him from the presence of all others besides Me. His affection [*mawadda*] has proved to be genuine, and when affection is authentic formalities are dispensed with.”

The other interpretation is: “Put so and so to sleep, for I dislike the sound of his voice, and make that other person get up, for I love to hear his voice.”

The lover becomes a loved one only when his heart is purified of everything apart from his Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). When his realization of the Divine Unity [*tawhīd*] is complete, as well as his absolute trust [*tawakkul*], his faith [*īmān*], his conviction [*iqān*] and his direct knowledge [*maʿrifā*], that is when he becomes a loved one. His suffering then departs and comfort comes to him.

Suppose someone loved a certain king, but was separated from him by a great distance, so love overwhelmed him and he set out in a daze, heading in the direction of the king’s country. He travels by day and by night, enduring all kinds of hardship and danger. He enjoys neither food nor drink until he reaches the door of his palace. The king has had news about his condition, so he sends his servants out to welcome him. They take him to the bath [*ḥamām*] to get him cleaned up, dress him in the finest clothes and make him fragrant with perfumes. Then they bring him into the presence of the king, who entertains him, talks to him, asks him about his condition, marries him to the most beautiful of his slave girls and grants him a portion of his kingdom. He becomes the beloved favorite of the king, so what reason could he have, after all this, to be afraid or weary or to wish to go back to his own country? Why should he wish to part from him, when he has come to be established and trusted in his presence?

This heart, when it has attained to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), comes to be endowed with His nearness and His intimate conversation, secure in His presence, so it has no desire to leave Him again and go back to any other. The way for the heart to reach this station [*maqām*] is through the performance of the obligatory religious duties [*farāʾid*], patient renunciation of unlawful things [*ḥarām*] and carnal desires [*shahawāt*], obtaining things that are permissible [*mubāḥ*] and lawful [*ḥalāl*] without passion [*hawā*] and lust [*shahwa*] and involvement [*wujūd*], and the practice of salutary restraint [*waraʿ shāfi*] and perfect abstinence [*zuhd kāmīl*]. It is the giving up of everything apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), opposition to the lower self [*nafs*], the passions [*hawā*] and the devil [*shaitān*], the cleansing of the heart from all creatures whatsoever, and equal indifference to

praise or blame, to receiving gifts or having them withheld, and to the hard life of the desert [*hajar*] or the comfort of civilized living [*madar*]. The first stage of this business is bearing witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh [*shahādatu an lā ilāha illa' llāh*], and the last is equal indifference to rough or civilized living. When a person's heart is sound, he is so closely connected with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) that desert and town, praise and blame, sickness and good health, riches and poverty, worldly success and failure are all on an equal footing as far as he is concerned.

When someone has genuinely reached this stage, he experiences the death of his lower self [*nafs*] and his passions [*hawā*], his natural urges cease to flare up, and his devil becomes humbly submissive to him. This world and its lords [*arbāb*] become insignificant to his heart, while the hereafter and its lords acquire great importance in its sight. Then he turns away from both these worlds and moves toward his Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). His heart finds a track in the midst of creatures [*khalq*], on which it can pass through to the Truth [*Ḥaqq*]. They step aside for him to right and left, pull back and clear the path for him. They run away from the fire of his truthfulness [*ṣidq*] and the awe-inspiring dignity of his innermost being [*sirr*].

When someone has genuinely reached this stage, no opponent can make him turn back and no obstacle can bar his way to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). His banner cannot be repulsed, nor his army put to flight. His birds [of good omen] cannot be silenced, and the sword of his affirmation of Unity [*tawḥīd*] cannot be blunted. His steps do not falter. His task is not difficult for him, and neither door nor lock can hold fast in front of him. Doors and locks fly apart, and all avenues are opened up. Nothing stands before him until he stands before the Lord. Then He will treat him kindly and let him sleep in His chamber. He will give him to eat of His gracious bounty and to drink of His intimate friendship [*uns*]. At this point he will see what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no human heart has ever conceived.

This servant's return to creatures is for the purpose of guiding them aright and ruling them. They are all subject to the dominion of this servant, who has attained to Him, who has seen Him and regards everything apart from Him as the work of creation. He becomes useful

to the people as an expert [*jahbadh*], a mediator [*saḡīr*] who points the way to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Now he is called great in the spiritual kingdom [*malakūt*]. All creatures are under the feet of his heart and find protection in his shade.

You are not rightly guided. You lay claim to that which does not belong to you, and to what you do not possess. Your lower self [*naḡs*] is in control of you, and creatures and all of this world are in your heart. In your heart they are greater than Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You are outside the limit of the people [of the Lord] and their estimation. If you wish to attain to what I have hinted at, you must devote your attention to the purification of your heart from all things. You must obey the commandments and observe the prohibitions [of the Lord], be patient with destiny [*qadar*], and expel this world from your heart. After all this, come here to me, so that I may talk with you and tell you about what lies beyond all that. If you do this, you will obtain what you wish, but anything said beforehand would be senseless jabber.

Woe unto you! You need a bite to eat, you lose some trivial little thing, or you suffer an insult to your honor—and it is the end of the world for you! You protest against Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You vent your rage by beating your wife and children. You curse your religion [*ḡīn*] and your Prophet [*naḡī*]. If you were a sensible person, one of the people of wakefulness and vigilant awareness, you would hold your tongue in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You would look upon all of His actions [*aḡ āl*] as a blessing for your benefit and in your interest. If you pause and do not quarrel, if you are thankful and not ungrateful, if you are content and not dissatisfied, if you are quiet and do not complain, you will be told:

Will not Allāh defend His servant? (39:36)

O hasty one, be patient and you will have good and wholesome food to eat. You do not know Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you really knew [*araḡta*] Him, you would not complain about Him to others. If you really knew Him, you would hold your tongue in His presence. You would not demand things of Him and would not pester Him with your supplication [*ḡu ā*]. No, you would rather comply with His wishes and be patient with Him. Be sensible! You do not need any justification. Everything He does is beneficial. He puts you to the test to see how you

will behave. He examines you to find out whether you are confident of His promise, whether you realize that He is Watching you and Aware of you.

Surely you must realize that if the day-laborer [*rūzkārī*] were to beg for a handout while inside the king's palace, this would amount to impudence and greediness on his part. He would be evicted at once from the palace, and would be told: "This fellow needs to go begging." The faith [*īmān*] of the believer [*mu'min*] cannot be complete as long as his heart still contains any cupidity, greed or importunate demand, or any creatures on whom his fears and hopes are pinned. To achieve this completeness he must practice constant reflection [*fikr*] and studiously examine the basic sources [*uṣūl*: 'roots'] and the practical applications derived from them [*furū'*: 'branches']. He must reflect upon the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] of the Prophets [*nabiyyūn*], the Messengers [*mursalūn*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], on how the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) delivered them from the hands of their enemies and helped them to triumph over their foes, and on how He gave them relief and a way out of their problems.

It is through genuine reflection that absolute trust [*tawakkul*] becomes truly established. This world disappears from the heart and it forgets about jinn, human beings, angels and all creatures, while it remembers the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The owner of this heart comes to be as if no one else had been created. He comes to be as if he were the only one subject to the [divine] commandments, there being no other creatures; as if he were the only one subject to the [divine] prohibitions, likewise, and as if he were the sole recipient of the [divine] blessings. It seems to him that all obligations rest on the neck of his innermost being [*sirr*] and his heart. He sees the mountains of obligations, in all their variety of forms, as a mission [*risāla*] from the One who imposes obligations [*al-Mukallif*], so he undertakes it in order to prove the reality of his servitude [*'ubūdiyya*] and his readiness to obey [*tawā'iyya*]. He becomes a carrier for creatures, while the Creator carries him. He becomes a physician for them, while his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) is his own physician. He becomes the door for creatures to reach the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and a mediator [*ṣaḥīr*] between them and Him. He becomes a sun from which they receive light on their path toward Him. He becomes

the food and drink of creatures, for he is never absent from them. He becomes their interest and welfare entirely, and forgets about himself. He comes to be as if he had no lower self [*nafs*], no natural inclinations [*ṭabʿ*] and no passions [*hawā*]. He forgets about his own food and drink and clothing. He becomes forgetful of himself, mindful of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He takes his heart away from his own self and from creatures, but remains with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). All he seeks is the well-being of other creatures. He has committed his own self [*sallama nafsahu*] to the hand of the judgment [*qaḍāʾ*] of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), letting go of it completely.

Such is the character of one who is willing to undertake the task of conducting people to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). As for you, you are a crazy fool, ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His Messengers [*rusul*], His saints [*awliyāʾ*] and His special favorites [*khawāṣṣ*] among His creatures. You claim to practice abstinence [*zuḥd*], yet you are always craving [*rāghib*]. Your abstinence is a cripple with no feet. Your only yearning is for this world and creatures. You have no yearning for your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Be careful how you stand in front of me! Come with good thoughts and good manners, so that I may guide you to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and make you familiar with the path to Him. You must take off the clothes of arrogance and dress yourself in the clothes of humility. You must be put to shame, so that you may receive honor. You must humble yourself so that you may grow in stature. All that you are now engaged in and involved with is crazy foolishness. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) pays no attention to it. This business does not come about through the actions of the physical body. Our Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace) used to say:

Abstinence is in here. Pious devotion [*taqwā*] is in here. Sincerity [*ikhhlās*] is in here.

—and he would be pointing at his breast.

If someone wishes for success [*falāḥ*], let him become a piece of ground beneath the feet of the Shaikhs. What is the character of these Shaikhs? They are those who give up this world and creatures, who bid them

farewell, who say goodbye to everything below the heavenly Throne [‘*arsh*] down to the surface of the earth, who leave all things behind and bid them the farewell of one who will never be coming back to them again. They say goodbye to all creatures, including their own selves. Their existence [*wujūd*] is together with their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in all their states [*aḥwāl*]. If anyone seeks the love of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) together with the existence of his own self [*nafs*], he is indulging in delusion and fantasy. The majority of those who behave like ascetics [*mutaṣahhidūn*] and devout worshippers [*muta‘abbidūn*] are actually the slaves of creatures, whom they treat as if they were partners of Allāh [*mushrikūna bihim*].

You must not put your trust in material means [*asbāb*], making idols of them and depending on them, because you will incur the wrath of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), of Him who is the Originator of all means [*Musabbib al-asbāb*], the Creator [*Khāliq*] of them and the One who keeps them at His disposal [*al-Mutaṣarrif fihā*]. It is the firm belief [*i‘tiqād*] of those who follow the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the Sunna of His Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) that the sword does not cut because of its nature [*ṭab’*], but that it is Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) who cuts with it; that fire does not burn because of its nature, but that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the One who uses it to burn; that food does not satisfy hunger because of its nature, but that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) uses it to satisfy our hunger; that water does not quench thirst because of its nature, but that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the One who quenches our thirst with it. Likewise with all material means in the variety of their forms, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the One who controls and applies them, while they are merely instruments in His hands, with which He does whatever He will.

Since He is the Doer [*Fā‘il*] in reality [*‘ala’l-ḥaqīqa*], why do you not resort to Him in all your affairs, let go of your needs and make a regular practice of affirming His Oneness [*tawḥīd*] under all circumstances? His instructions are obvious; they are not concealed from any intelligent person. The slave gets beaten with a stick, but a nod is enough for the free man. You must obey Him, for He will honor those who obey Him.

Do not disobey Him, for He will dishonor those who disobey Him. Triumph and failure are in His hand. He honors with triumph whomever He will, and dishonors with failure whomever He will. He honors with knowledge [*ilm*] whomever He will, and dishonors with ignorance whomever He will. He honors with nearness whomever He will, and dishonors with remoteness whomever He will.

Sixty-first Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, on the 20th of Rajab, A.H. 546, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion and in response to a question someone put to him about notions [*khawāṭir*]:

How to explain to you what notions are? Your notions come from the devil [*shaiṭān*], natural impulses [*ṭabʿ*], the passions [*hawā*] and this world. Your interest or concern [*hamm*] is whatever is most important to you [*aḥammaka*]. Your notions correspond in kind to your interest while it is active. A notion [*khāṭir*] inspired by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) comes only to the heart, free from anything apart from Him. As He has said:

Allāh forbid that we should seize anyone except him with whom we found our property. (12:79)

If Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His remembrance [*dhikr*] are present with you, your heart will certainly be filled with His nearness, and the notions suggested by the devil, the passions and this world will all avoid your company. There is a kind of notion belonging to this world, and a notion belonging to the hereafter. There is a notion belonging to the angels, a notion belonging to the lower self [*nafs*], and a notion belonging to the heart. There is also a notion belonging to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). It is therefore necessary for you, O truthful one [*ṣādiq*], to get rid of all those other notions and to rely on the notion of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you reject the notion of the lower self, the notion of the passions, the devil's notion and the notion of this world, the notion of the hereafter will come to you. Then you will receive the angel's notion, then finally the notion of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is the ultimate stage.

When your heart is sound, it will pause to ask each notion as it arises: "What kind of notion are you? From what source do you come?" So they will tell him in turn: "I am the notion of such and such." "I am a true notion from the Truth [*khāṭir ḥaqq min al-Ḥaqq*]." "I am a loving counselor; the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) loves you, so I love you too." "I am the ambassador [*safīr*]." "I am your portion of the spiritual state [*ḥāl*] of Prophethood [*nubuwwa*]."

O young man! You must devote your attention to real knowledge [*maʿrifa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for it is the root of all that is good. If you are constant in obedience to Him, He will grant you real knowledge of Himself. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

When the servant obeys his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), He grants him real knowledge of Himself. Even if he then ceases to obey Him, He will not deprive him of it. Rather will He let it remain in his heart, so that He may bring it in evidence against him on the Day of Resurrection, when He will say to him: 'I honored you with real knowledge of Me, and I granted it to you as a privilege, so why did you not put into practice what you learned?'

O young man! Nothing will fall into your hand from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) because of your hypocrisy [*nifāq*], your smooth talk and your eloquence, making your face look pale, stitching patches on your tattered cloak, hunching your shoulders and pretending to weep. All that stuff comes from your lower self [*nafs*], your devil, your idolatrous attitude [*shirk*] to creatures and trying to gain worldly advantage from them.

After some discussion, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) went on to say:

You must look down on your lower self [*nafs*] and exercise restraint. Keep this up until you are told: "Speak about the blessings of your Lord!" The son of Simeon [*Shamʿūn*] (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) used to say, whenever he received a charismatic gift [*karāma*]: "This is a deception. This is from the devil [*shaiṭān*]." He kept on doing this until he was told: "Who are you, and who is your father? Speak about Our blessings upon you!"

Moses (peace be upon him) said to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in the course of his intimate conversation [*munājāt*] with Him: “O my Lord, advise me!” So He said in reply: “I advise you to trust in Me and to seek Me.” This exchange was repeated four times, with the same request being made and the same reply being given each time. The Lord did not tell him to seek this world, nor to seek the hereafter. It was as if He were telling him: “I advise you to obey Me and give up disobeying Me. I advise you to seek My nearness. I advise you to affirm My Unity [*tawhīdī*] and to work for My sake. I advise you to turn away from everything apart from Me.”

When the heart is sound and really knows [*‘arafa*] the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), it refuses to acknowledge any other. It finds intimate friendship with Him and feels estranged from all others. It feels at ease in His company and uncomfortable with anyone besides Him.

O Allāh! Bear witness for me that I am doing my utmost in delivering exhortations [*mawā‘iz*] to Your servants, making every effort for the sake of their well-being.

I am detached from everything I am involved in. I keep myself separate from it, just as the rest of you separate yourselves from it as far as the inner content [*ma‘nā*] and the innermost being [*sirr*] are concerned. There is no mark of honor for me, if I happen to be together with Him in some aspect of His management [*tadbīr*] and operations [*taṣārīf*]. O you hermits and recluses, come here and get a taste of my words, be it only a single letter! Spend a day or a week in my company, and maybe you will learn something that will bring you benefit. The majority of you are governed by a delusion within a delusion, worshipping creatures in your cells [*ṣawāmi‘*]. This business is not something that comes about merely through sitting in secluded places [*khalawāt*] with ignorance for company.

Woe unto you! You must walk forth in search of knowledge [*‘ilm*] and scholars who put their knowledge into practice [*‘ulamā’ ‘ummāl*], until you can walk no farther. You must keep walking until your legs will no longer obey you. Then, when you have no strength left, you may sit down. Travel with your outer [*ẓāhir*], then with your heart and your inner content [*ma‘nā*]. When you are utterly exhausted both outwardly

and inwardly [*bāṭinan*] and have to stop, nearness to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and attainment to Him will come to you. When the footsteps of your heart come to a halt, and all your energies have gone into the journey toward Him, this is the sign of your nearness to Him, so at this point you must surrender [*sallim*] and cast yourself down in submission [*istatṛih*]. He will either build you a cell in the earth and lodge you in the desert wastes, or else He will send you back to civilization, putting this world and the hereafter, jinn, human beings, angels and spirits [*arwāh*] at your service.

When a servant has truly achieved nearness [to his Lord], he receives sainthood [*wilāya*] and deputyship [*niyāba*], and all the contents of the treasure houses are laid out before him. The earth and the heavens and all that they contain will intercede on his behalf, because of his regal status and because of the purity [*ṣafā'*] of his inner [*bāṭin*] and his secret being [*sirr*] and the radiant light of his heart.

Your Islām and your faith [*īmān*] must not be merely borrowed imitations. To make sure of this you need to be constant in your fear [of displeasing your Lord], your fasting [*ṣawm*], your prayers [*ṣalawāt*] and your sleepless vigil. This is why the people [of the Lord] have sometimes gone wandering in the wilderness, joining up with wild animals and competing with them for the herbs [*ḥashā'ish*] of the earth and the water of the creeks, while the sun became their awning and their lamps were the moon and the planets [*kawākib*]. You must give up most of your frivolous talk and gossip and wasting money. Do not spend too much time in the company of neighbors, friends and acquaintances without good reason, for this is foolish. Most of what passes between two people is telling lies and backbiting [*ghība*], and it takes two to stage a sinful revolt. None of you should go out of the house except to attend to your own essential interests or those of your family. Do make the effort not to be the first to speak, but rather let your words be a response to someone who asks you about something—provided there is some mutual benefit to be gained by responding to him, otherwise you should not answer his question. The people [of the Lord] are afraid of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances.

They give that which they give with hearts afraid. (23:60)

They are afraid of being caught unawares. They are afraid that their faith [*īmān*] may be a borrowed imitation. A few individuals [*āḥād afrād*]

amongst them receive from Allāh His gracious favors and His blessings, so their hearts enter the door of His nearness. They are permitted to enter into His presence. He befriends them and takes care of them. He causes them to be included among His saints [*awliyā'*], the deputies [*abdāl*] of His Prophets [*anbiyā'*] and the leaders [*a'yān*] of His creatures. He causes them to be numbered among the Shaikhs [*shuyūkh*] and Sultans [*salāṭīn*] of His servants. He appoints them as His delegates [*yastanībuhum*] on the earth and as His representatives [*yastakhlifuhum*] upon it. He makes them some of the few He has singled out [*mufradūn*]. He teaches them from His knowledge [*'ilm*], makes them speak by His decree [*ḥukm*], generously bestows His grace [*karāma*] upon them, assists them with His support [*imdād*], makes them aware of what is to their credit and what they owe, puts faith [*īmān*] on a firm footing within their hearts, and sets the crown of real experience [*ma'rifā*] upon the head of their faith. Destiny [*qadar*] serves them, while human beings, the jinn and the angels are standing at the ready in their presence. Their hearts and their innermost beings [*asrār*] receive the seals of authority [*tawāqī'*]. Each one of them is a king within himself, occupying the seat of the throne of his kingdom, dispatching his army into the land for the welfare of the people, to counter the work of Iblīs.

O my people! Follow in the footsteps of the people [of the Lord]. Do not let your main concern be with food and drink, clothes, sex and the amassing of worldly goods. Your main concern should be worshipful service [*'ibāda*] and giving up old habits [*'āda*]. Seek His door and pitch your tent beside it. Do not run away from the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) on account of adversities, for He uses trials and tribulations, sicknesses and ailments, to alert you to look for Him and never to leave His door. Do not be counted among those who fumble about, not knowing what the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wants from them. Worship Him, and then become sincerely devoted [*akhliṣū*] to His worshipful service. Surely you must have heard Him, how He has said:

And I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me. (52:56)

You realize this and know it to be true, so why do you abandon His worshipful service and stumble about on the path toward Him? Anyone

who does not serve Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) must be one of those who do not know why they have been created. As for those who are based on a footing of recognizing the truth [*taḥqīq*] and being realistic [*ḥaqīqa*], they acknowledge that they have been created for worshipful service, and that they will die and then be brought back to life, so they put servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*] into actual effect.

O young man! There are certain inner matters [*umūr bāṭina*] that come to be disclosed only after one has attained to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), stood at His door, and met the specially selected individuals [*mufradūn*] and delegates [*nuwwāb*] who are there at their posts. When you attain to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and stand waiting with good manners and with head bowed in silence, the door will be opened in front of your heart. It will be drawn in by the One who draws it in. It will be brought near by the One who brings it near. It will be lulled to sleep by the One who lulls it to sleep. It will be prepared for marriage by the One who prepares it for marriage. It will be anointed by the One who anoints it. It will be adorned by the One who adorns it. It will be delighted by the One who delights it. It will be kept safe by the One who keeps it safe. It will be conversed with by the One who converses with it, and talked to by the One who talks to it.

O you who are heedless of bliss [*na‘īm*], where are you? Your hearts are so far from the state of affairs I am hinting at. You imagine this to be such a simple matter that it can come about for you through artificial pretense [*taṣannu‘*], affected simulation [*takalluf*] and hypocrisy [*nifāq*]. In fact, it requires honesty [*ṣidq*] and patient endurance of the hammer-blows of destiny [*qadar*].

If you are a rich and healthy person, engaged in disobedience to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), but you turn in repentance from all your sins and errors, both those that are obvious and those that are concealed, and you go off into the deserts and the wastelands and seek the countenance of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), you will have to experience being put to the test. You will have to experience trials and tribulations. Your lower self [*nafs*] will demand the worldly goods and the well-being to which it has been accustomed, but you must not agree to let it have what it wants. If it can exercise patience, you will obtain the dominion of both this world and the hereafter, but if it does not exercise patience all this will pass it by.

O penitent, you must be steadfast and sincere. You must decide, together with your lower self, to let things turn around and let the trials and tribulations come. You must decide together with it that the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is going to keep it awake all night and make it go thirsty all day, that He will drive a wedge between it and your family, neighbors, friends and acquaintances, that He will sow hatred of it in their hearts, and that none of them will approach it or come near it.

Surely you must have heard the story of Job [Ayyūb] (peace be upon him), when Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) wished to love him and choose him for His own, and that no one but He should be left with any share in him, how He separated him from his goods, his family, his children and his companions, and made him live in a shack on top of a garbage dump, away from civilization. None of his family stayed with him except his wife, who worked as a servant for people and brought him his food. Then He took away his flesh and his skin and his strength, and left him with only his hearing, his sight and his heart, in which He showed the wonders of His power [*qudra*]. So he used to remember Him with his tongue and would converse with Him intimately [*yunājīhi*] with his heart. He would behold the wonders of His power with his sight, while his spirit [*rūh*] came and went in his physical frame. The angels [*malā'ika*] would pray for him [*tuṣallī 'alayhi*] and come to visit him. He was cut off from human kind [*ins*], while intimate friendship [*uns*] was connected with him. Material means and force and energies were cut off from him, while he remained the prisoner of His love, His destiny [*qadar*], His power [*qudra*], His will [*irāda*] and His foreordination [*sābiqa*]. His state of affairs was a mystery [*sirr*], then in the end it came to be public knowledge. The first part was bitter, but the second became sweet. Life became pleasant for him in the midst of his misfortune, just as life became pleasant for Abraham [*Ibrāhīm*] (peace be upon him) in the midst of his fiery furnace.

The people [of the Lord] are accustomed to exercising patience in the face of misfortune, and they do not get upset by the kind of disturbance that bothers you. Trials and tribulations are of various types. Some of them affect the physical constitution, while others affect the heart. Some of them are experienced in relation to creatures and others in relation to the Creator. There is no good in a person who has never had

to suffer. Trials and tribulations are the grappling hooks of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The eager longing of the abstinent worshipper [*‘ābid ṣāhid*] is for charismatic gifts [*karāmāt*] in this world and for the gardens [of Paradise] in the hereafter. The eager longing of the knower [*‘ārif*] is for his faith [*īmān*] to remain intact in this world, and for salvation [*khalās*] from the Fire of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) in the hereafter. His eager longing and desire for this will not cease until his heart is told: “What is this? Be confident and steadfast. Faith is firmly established in you. From you the believers [*mu’minūn*] can obtain a light for their own faith, and tomorrow you will be a successful intercessor [*mushaffa’*], whose word is accepted. You will be the cause of salvation from the Fire [of Hell] for many people. You will be in the presence of your Prophet, he who is the chief of the intercessors [*sayyid ash-shāfi’*in]. This is not something you need to be concerned about.”

Here we have a sealed declaration [*tawqī’*] to the effect that he is permanently assured of faith [*īmān*], knowledge [*ma’rifā*] and safety [*salāma*] in the afterlife [*‘āqiba*], and of walking in the company of the Prophets [*nabiyyūn*], the Messengers [*mursalūn*] and the champions of the truth [*ṣiddiqūn*], they who are the élite [*khawāṣṣ*] among creatures. Every time this assurance is reiterated to him, he becomes more fearful, more careful to behave properly, and more grateful than ever. The people [of the Lord] have grasped the meaning of His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

He does whatever He will. (2:253)

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned (21:23)

But you will not, unless Allāh wills, the Lord of the Worlds. (81:29)

They have understood that He is “Doer of what He wishes” (11:107), not of what creatures wish, and that “every day He is about some awesome business” (55:29), advancing and deferring, promoting and demoting, honoring and disgracing, dismissing and appointing, causing to die and bringing to life, enriching and impoverishing, giving and withholding. The hearts of the people [of the Lord] have no fixed condition in relation to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for He changes them and alters them, brings them near and sets them at a

distance, honors them and puts them to shame, gives to them and withholds from them. Spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] are always changing for the people [of the Lord], while their basic attitude is the actual practice [*taḥqīq*] of servitude [*‘ubūdiyya*], good behavior and respectful silence.

O Allāh, grant us the grace of good behavior in Your company and in the company of Your special favorites [*khawāṣṣ*] among Your creatures. Do not afflict us with dependence on material means [*asbāb*] and reliance thereon. Make us secure in our affirmation of Your Oneness [*tawḥīd*], our absolute trust [*tawakkul*] in You, our total satisfaction with You and reliance on You for all our needs. Do not put us to the test in our words and our deeds, and do not take us to task because of them. Treat us with Your generous kindness, Your tolerance [*tajāwwuz*] and Your forgiveness [*musāmaha*]. Āmīn.

On the Path of Truth [*ṭarīq al-ḥaqq*] there are no creatures [*khalq*]. On it there are no material means [*sabab*]. On it there is no known quantity [*ma‘lūm*]. On it there is no direction and no entrance gate. On it the creation has no existence [*wujūd*].

The physical constitution [*binya*] goes together with this world, the heart [*qalb*] goes together with the hereafter, and the innermost being [*sirr*] goes together with the Master [*Mawlā*]. The innermost being should have authority over the heart, the heart should have authority over the tranquil self [*nafs muṭma‘inna*], the tranquil self should have authority over the physical constitution, and the limbs and organs [*jawāriḥ*] should have authority over created things. When the servant has all this in the right and proper order, jinn and human beings and angels will come to be beneath his feet. They will all have to stand while he is seated on the throne of nearness [to the Lord].

O hypocrite, you will never achieve this through your hypocrisy [*nifāq*] and pretense [*taṣannu‘*]. You cultivate your personal dignity [*nāmūs*]. You cultivate your acceptance in the hearts of creatures. You cultivate the kissing of your hand. You are bad luck for yourself in this world and the hereafter, as well as for those you cultivate and whom you persuade to follow you. You are an impostor [*mura‘in*], a charlatan [*dajjāl*], a swindler of people’s property. Surely no prayer [*da‘wa*] of yours will be answered, and there can be no place for you in the hearts of the champions of truth [*siddīqūn*]. Allāh has let you go knowingly astray.

Once the dust has cleared away, you will see whether that is a horse underneath you, or a donkey. Once the dust has cleared, you will see the men of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) riding fine horses and camels, while you are behind them on a broken donkey, falling into the clutches of corrupt Satans [*shayāṭīn*] and devils [*abāliṣa*].

You must work hard to ensure that your hearts are not locked out of the door of His nearness. Be sensible! You are getting nowhere. You must seek the company of a Shaikh who is learned in the law [*ḥukm*] and knowledge [*ʿilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and who will show you the way toward Him. Without seeing the successful [*muṣṭliḥ*], one cannot succeed. If a person does not seek the company of scholars who put their knowledge into practice [*ʿulamāʾ* *ʿummāl*], he is a chicken from an egg abandoned by the rooster and the mother hen. Seek the fellowship of those who enjoy fellowship with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). What each one of you should do, when the night has grown dark and people have gone to bed and their voices are silent, is get up, take an ablution [*yatawaddaʾ*], perform two cycles of ritual prayer [*yuṣalli rakʿatain*] and say: “O my Lord, guide me to one of Your righteous servants near to You, so that he may guide me toward You and make me familiar with Your path.” The instrument [*sabab*] is necessary. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) was quite capable of guiding [His servants] to Him without the Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*]. Be sensible! You are getting nowhere. You must awaken from your heedless folly. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

If someone relies entirely on his own subjective judgment, he will go astray.

Try to find someone who will be a mirror for the face of your religion [*dīn*], just as you look in the mirror to check the appearance of your outer face, your turban and your hair. Be sensible! What is this crazy foolishness? You say, “I don’t need anyone to teach me,” and yet the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

The believer is the believer’s mirror [*al-muʾminu mirʾātuʾl-muʾmin*].

When the believer’s faith is sound, he comes to be a mirror for all creatures. They behold their religious faces [*wujūh adyānihim*] reflected in the mirror of his speech, every time they see him and get close to him.

What is this craziness? Not a moment goes by without your begging Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to provide you with more than you already have to eat, to drink and to wear, with more sexual opportunities and more income. These are not things that could increase or decrease, even if you were to be joined in your plea by every supplicant whose prayers are answered [*dā'in mujāb*]. Supplication [*dā'wa*] will neither increase one's sustenance by so much as an atom, nor reduce it by an atom. This is a foregone conclusion [*mafrūgh minhu*]. You must devote your attention to doing what you have been commanded to do, and to avoiding what you have been forbidden to do. You should not worry about that which is bound to come your way, because He guarantees that it will come to you. Allotted shares [*aqsām*] arrive at their appointed times, whether they be sweet or bitter, whether you like them or dislike them. The people [of the Lord] attain to a condition in which they no longer have any prayer of supplication [*du'ā'*] or request [*su'āl*] to make. They do not beg [in their prayers] to gain advantages, nor to get rid of disadvantages. Their supplication comes to be a matter concerning their hearts, sometimes for their own sake and sometimes for the sake of all creatures, so they utter the prayer of supplication without conscious premeditation [*fī ghaiba*].

O Allāh, endow us with good behavior in Your company under all circumstances!

[When the believer's faith is sound], fasting [*ṣawm*], prayer [*ṣalāt*], remembrance [*dhikr*] and all acts of obedience [*tā'āt*] become second nature to him, mingled with his flesh and blood. Then he receives protection from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances. The restraint of the law [*ḥukm*] does not desert him, not for an instant, while he is on this course. The law comes to be like the vessel in which he sits, as he travels over the ocean of the power [*qudra*] of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He goes on traveling over it until he arrives at the shore of the hereafter, at the shore of the ocean of grace and the hand of nearness. Thus he is sometimes in the company of creatures and at certain times in the company of the Creator. His work and toil are with creatures, while his relaxation is with the Creator.

Woe unto you, O hypocrite, you do not have a clue about this! Woe unto you, none of this enters into your concerns. O you who sit there

in your hermits' cells [*ṣawāmi'*], while creatures fill your hearts, can you not hear me shouting at you and calling out to you? Are you deaf and dumb? Get up and come here! It's all right! I shall not deal with you or speak to you in accordance with your own bad manners and behavior. No, I shall treat you kindly, with the gentle kindness [*rifq*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), with His permission. You must not be put off by the roughness of my way of speaking, for that is not because of me. I only utter what He makes me utter.

O young man! The people [of the Lord] work day and night in the worshipful service of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and their attitude is one of fear and caution, for they are afraid of a bad outcome. They were ignorant of the foreknowledge [*'ilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) about them and the outcome of their business, so they spent their days and nights in sorrow and sadness and weeping. As well as faithfully performing the prayer [*ṣalāt*], the fast [*ṣiyām*], the pilgrimage [*ḥajj*] and all other acts of obedience, they remembered their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) with their hearts and their tongues, so when they reached the hereafter they entered the Garden [of Paradise] and saw the face of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His generous favor toward them. They praised Him in gratitude for this, and said:

Praise be to Allāh who has put grief away from us. (35:34)

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has servants [*'ibād*], and these are their teachers [*asātidha*], their Shaikhs, their chiefs, their leaders and their kings. They say: "Praise be to Allāh who has put grief away from us, in this world before the hereafter." When their hearts have reached the door of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), they are surprised to find it open, with escorts arrayed to meet them, a select band standing at the ready, expecting their arrival, saluting them and bowing before them in respectful silence. Thus they enter the palace of nearness [to the Lord] and witness that which no eye has ever seen, which no ear has ever heard of, and which has never occurred to any human heart. They say: "Praise be to Allāh who has put away from us the grief of remoteness, the grief of separation. Praise be to Allāh, for not having made us preoccupied with this world, the hereafter and creatures. Praise be to Allāh who has chosen us for Himself, selected us

for His nearness and put away from us the grief of withdrawal from Him, the grief of preoccupation with anything other than Him. Praise be to Allāh who has granted us the blessing of withdrawal toward Him.”

Our Lord is indeed Forgiving, Bountiful. (35:34)

O young man! When you have firmly established your faith [*īmān*], you will reach the abode of experience [*maʿrifā*], then the valley of knowledge [*ʿilm*], then the valley of extinction [*fanāʾ*] to you and to all creatures. Then you will come to existence [*wujūd*] through Him, not through you and not through them. At this stage your grief will disappear, for preservation will serve you, protection will surround you, helpful guidance [*tawfiq*] will stand respectfully before you, the angels will walk around you, the spirits [*arwāḥ*] will come forward to salute you, and the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will proudly display you to His creatures. His attentive glances will watch over you and draw you toward the abode of His nearness and intimate friendship [*uns*] and conversation [*munājāt*] with Him.

A failure is he who holds back from me with no good excuse. Woe unto you! You try to compete with me in this station [*maqām*] of mine in which I am installed. You cannot do it. You will get nothing by trying to compete with me. This is something that is sent down from heaven to the earth. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And naught there is, but with Us are the stores thereof, and We send it down only in a known measure. (15:21)

The rain comes down out of the sky onto the earth, from which the plants then sprout. This business comes down from heaven to the ground of hearts, so they tremble and sprout with every kind of goodness. They bring forth mysteries [*asrār*], the elements of wisdom [*ḥikam*], the affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawḥīd*], absolute trust [*tawakkul*], intimate conversation and nearness to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). This heart comes to have within it various kinds of trees and fruits. It comes to have within it wastelands and desert regions, oceans and rivers and mountains. It comes to be the gathering place of human beings, jinn, angels and spirits [*arwāḥ*]. This is something beyond mental comprehension—sheer power [*qudra maḥḍa*] and will [*irāda*] and knowledge [*ʿilm*]. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) appropriates it

exclusively to Himself, and it is available to a very few individuals among all His creatures.

You must try hard to fall into the net of my words. My sitting and talking is a net into which I am waiting for one of you to fall. As for the bait, it belongs to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He); it is not my bait. Respond to me, so that Allāh may have mercy upon you. Follow me, so that I may carry you to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Honesty [*ṣidq*] is the herald of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), while lying [*kidhb*] is the herald of the devil. The truth [*ḥaqq*] is one thing and falsehood [*bāṭil*] is something else. Both of them are clearly apparent to every believer [*mu'min*] who sees by the light of his faith [*īmān*]. You claim to possess a keen intelligence, O people of 'Irāq, yet you cannot distinguish the honest person from the liar, the truthful from the false. The harmful influence of your rejecting the truth will come back to haunt you, but I am not bothered about that.

The seeker [*murīd*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is not wishing for His Garden [of Paradise], nor is he afraid of His Fire [of Hell]. No, he wishes only for His countenance. He hopes to be near to Him and dreads being distant from Him. As for you, you are the prisoner of the devil [*shaitān*], the passions [*hawā*], the lower self [*nafs*], this world and the desires of the flesh [*shahawāt*]. But you do not have a clue. Your heart is in shackles and you do not have a clue.

O Allāh, deliver him from his captivity, and deliver us! Āmīn.

You must practice strict observance [*ʿazīma*] and avoid special concessions [*rukḥṣa*]. When a person always takes advantage of special concessions and gives up strict observance, it is to be feared that he is risking the total loss of his religion [*dīn*]. Strict observance is for grown men, because it is the serious course, the harder and tougher one, while the way of concession is for youngsters and women, since it is the easier course.

O young man! You must take your place in the front row, because it is the row of courageous men [*rijāl shujʿān*], and stay away from the back row, because it is the row of cowards. You must put this lower self [*nafs*] to work and make it get used to strict observance, for it should carry

whatever you want it to carry. Do not spare the rod, for it is liable to fall asleep and let its burdens drop. Do not show it the white of your teeth and the white of your eyes! It is a bad servant, reluctant to do any work unless it gets the stick. Do not allow it to eat its fill, unless you know for sure that having a full belly will not make it turn mischievous, and that it will work in exchange for having its appetite satisfied.

Sufyān ath-Thawrī (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) was given to much work of pious obedience [*tāʿa*] and also to much eating. When he had eaten his fill, he would coin the analogy: “Give the slave [*zanjī*] as much as he can eat, and make him work flat out. The slave is just a donkey.” Then he would set about his worshipful service [*ibāda*] and take a plentiful helping of that.

A certain righteous man is reported as having said: “I saw Sufyān ath-Thawrī eating so much that I was disgusted at him. Then he prayed [*ṣallā*] and wept so much that I felt compassion for him.”

You should not try to emulate Sufyān’s capacity for all that eating, but do follow his example where his great capacity for worshipful obedience is concerned. For you are not Sufyān. Do not satisfy your lower self as he used to satisfy his, for you are not in control of it as he was in control of his lower self.

You must make a serious effort to keep well away from things that are unlawful [*ḥarām*], and to be sparing in your use of those that are lawful [*ḥalāl*]. Abstain from everything in accordance with the strength of your faith [*īmān*] and your conviction [*iqān*], then you will become one of the servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). When your abstinence is confirmed, He will bestow His gifts and blessings upon you, either through indirect means or by putting creative power [*takwīn*] at the disposal of your heart.

There is nothing worth discussing until you become one of the servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not a servant of creatures and material means [*asbāb*], not one of those who are slaves to this world, to pleasures, desires and devils, nor one of those who are slaves to the love of prestige [*jāh*] in the eyes of creatures and attachment to their favor and disfavor, their praise and their blame. This is something of which no good can come. Your heart will not take one single step toward the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and

Glorious is He) as long as you are stuck with your lower self [*nafs*] in the house of your natural inclinations [*ṭabʿ*] and your passions [*hawā*]. It seems to me that you are permanently attached to creatures and material means. How long will this go on? You must learn from me how to escape from your attachments. O ignorant one, how can your heart see the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) when it is full of creatures? How can you see the door of the congregational mosque [*jāmiʿ*], while you are sitting there at home? When you go out of your house, away from your wife and children, that is when you will see the door of the mosque. When you leave everything behind you, to your successors, then you will see.

So it is that as long as you are stuck with creatures you cannot see the Creator. As long as you are stuck with this world you cannot see the hereafter. As long as you are stuck with the hereafter you cannot see the Lord of both this world and the hereafter. When you move away from everything, your innermost being [*sirr*] will meet your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), not in terms of outer form [*ṣūra*] but rather in terms of inner content [*maʿnā*]. The work is for our hearts, while the inner contents [*maʿānī*] are for our innermost beings [*asrār*]. The people [of the Lord] have turned away from their works [*aʿmāl*]. They have forgotten all their good deeds [*ḥasanāt*], seeking no recompense for them, so He has surely lodged them in the secure abode of His abundant favor, where toil touches them not and no weariness can affect them, nor any cessation or weakness, and where there is no having to earn a livelihood and provide sustenance.

According to one of the commentators [*mufasssirūn*] on the Qurʾān, the meaning of His words (Exalted is He): “where toil does not touch us” (35:35), is [that there we are free from] concern over bread and how to come by it, and having to make provision for our dependants.

The Garden [of Paradise] is total abundance, total goodness, total comfort, giving without counting the cost. Everything revolves around the fact that your heart is in the presence of Allāh. There is no cause-and-effect connection with this world, the hereafter or any of His creatures. Your heart can be truly present to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) only after death and the real experience [*tahqīq*] of remembering it. If you look, you are looking at death. If you hear, you

are hearing death. The remembrance of death in reality [*ḥaqīqa*] is experienced through complete wakefulness. You must detest every carnal desire [*shahwa*] and resist every pleasure. Remember death, for you have no way of escaping it.

When the heart is truly sound, it forgets everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is the One who exists from all eternity [*al-Qadīm*], the Sempiternal [*al-Azālī*], the Enduring [*ad-Dā'im*], the Everlasting [*al-Abadī*], and everything apart from Him is but newly created [*muḥdath*]. When the heart is truly sound, the speech that issues from it will come to be correct and true, so that no one can refute it. Heart will speak to heart, innermost being [*sirr*] to innermost being, private refuge [*khalwa*] to private refuge, inner content [*ma'nā*] to inner content, essence [*lubb*] to essence, conscience [*ṣawāb*] to conscience. At this stage, therefore, the words that come from it will be for other hearts like seeds that sprout in good soft earth, not salty marshland. When the heart is truly sound, it becomes a tree with branches, leaves and fruit. It comes to contain benefits for all creatures, whether they be humans or jinn or angels.

When there is no soundness in the heart, it is like the hearts of animals, an outer form with no inner content, a vessel with nothing to fill it, a tree without fruit, a cage without a bird, a house with no one living in it, a treasure chest holding a store of dirhams [silver coins], dīnārs [gold coins] and jewels but with no one to distribute them, a body without a spirit [*rūḥ*], like those bodies that were transmuted into stones because they had form but no content. The heart that rejects Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), disbelieving [*kāfir*] in Him, is subject to metamorphosis [*mamsūkh*]. This is why Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has likened it to a stone, for He has said:

Then your hearts were hardened, even after that, and became like rocks or even harder still. (2:74)

When the Children of Israel failed to put the Torah [*Tawrah*] into practice, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) transmuted their hearts into stones and banished them from His door. The same could happen to you, O Muḥammadans [*ḡā Muḥammadiyyīn*]! If you do not put the Qur'ān into practice and do not master its laws [*aḥkām*], He may transmute your hearts and banish them from His door. Do not be those

whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has allowed to go knowingly astray. If you acquire knowledge for the sake of creatures, you will work for the sake of creatures, and if you acquire knowledge for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) you will work for His sake. If you acquire knowledge for the sake of this world, you will work for the sake of this world, and if you acquire knowledge for the sake of the hereafter, you will work for the sake of the hereafter. The branches are based upon the roots. “As you pay allegiance, so shall allegiance be paid to you [*kamā tadīnu tudānu*].” Every pot exudes its own contents. You fill your pot with naphtha [*naft*] and then expect it to exude rose water. You are unworthy of respect. You work for the sake of creatures, yet you wish to have the Creator on your side tomorrow [at the Resurrection], to enjoy nearness to Him and to look upon Him. You are unworthy of respect.

This is the obvious and most probable scenario. But if He grants you His gifts purely as a gracious favor, not for any work you have done, that is up to Him. Worshipful obedience [*tāʿa*] is the work of the Garden [of Paradise], while sinful disobedience [*maʿṣiya*] is the work of the Fire [of Hell]. After that, the matter is up to Him. If He so wills, He may reward one of us without reference to work, or He may chastise one of us without reference to work. This is all up to Him, “Doer of whatever He wishes” (11:107).

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

Even if He were to send one of the Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*] and the righteous [*ṣālihūn*] into the Fire [of Hell], He would be Just [*ʿĀdil*], and that would be the telling argument. It is incumbent upon us to say, “The Commander has told the truth [*ṣadaqaʾl-amīr*],” and it is not for us to say, “Why and how could this possibly happen? Even if it had some basis in justice and right, such a thing could never be, and He would never do anything of the kind!”

Listen to me and try to grasp what I have to say, for I am the humble servant [*ghulām*] of those who have gone on before us. I stand in their presence. I spread out their wares and invite people to examine them. I never cheat in the process, and do not pretend that they are my own property. I begin by quoting what they have said, then I go over it from my own point of view.

Blessed grace [*baraka*] comes from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has bestowed many blessings upon me, such as my obedience to the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and my filial piety [*birr*] toward my father and my mother. May Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) have mercy upon them both! My father abstained from the pleasures of this world, although he had the power to enjoy them, while my mother went along with him in this and approved of what he did. They were among the people of righteousness [*ṣalāh*], religious devotion [*diyāna*] and compassion for all creatures, but my real concern is not with them, nor with other people. I have come to the Bearer of the Message [*ar-Rasūl*] and the Sender of the Message [*al-Mursil*], and because of them I prosper. Every benefit and blessing of mine is with them and in their presence. Among creatures I wish for no one apart from Muḥammad (Allāh bless him and give him peace), and among lords for none but my Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O learned one, your speech comes from your tongue, not from your heart, from your outer form and not from your inner content [*ma'nā*]. The true heart shies away from words that issue from the tongue instead of from the heart, for they sound like a bird in a cage, or like the hypocrite in the mosque [*masjid*]. If one of the champions of truth [*ṣiddiqūn*] should find himself by accident at a session [*majlis*] held by one of the hypocritical scholars, his whole aspiration would be to get out of there.

The people [of the Lord] can detect the signs that mark the pretenders [*murā'ūn*], the hypocrites [*munāfiqūn*], the impostors [*dajjālūn*], the heretical innovators [*muḥtadī'ūn*], the enemies of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the enemies of His Messenger. These signs are apparent in their faces and in their way of speaking. They flee from the champions of truth as they might flee from a lion, fearful of being scorched by the fire of their hearts. The angels take them away from the champions of truth and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]. One of them may be great in the eyes of the common folk [*awāmm*], but in the eyes of the champions of truth he is of no account. To the common folk he is a human being [*ādami*], but to the champions of truth he is a cat [*sinnawr*]. He carries no weight with them.

The champion of truth [*ṣiddīq*] sees by the light of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not by the light of his own two eyes, nor by the light of the sun and the moon. This is the general light of Allāh, but he also has a special light given to him by Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). This light comes after mastery of the law [*ihkām al-ḥukm*] and proficiency in it. In other words, he has put the Book and the Sunna into practice, so he is given the light of knowledge [*nūr al-ʿilm*].

O Allāh, grant us the blessings of Your forbearance [*ḥilm*], Your knowledge [*ʿilm*] and Your nearness! Āmīn.

May Allāh not grant you His blessing, O hypocrites, for all too often your whole preoccupation is with cultivating your relations with creatures and sabotaging your relations with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O Allāh, give me authority over their heads, so that I may purge the earth of them!

The sign of the hypocrite's hypocrisy [*nifāq al-munāfiq*] in this day and age is that he will not enter my presence and will not salute me if he happens to meet me, for to do so would be an unnatural affectation on his part. This religion [*dīn*] has perished; its walls have come tumbling down.

O Allāh, provide me with helpers [*aʿwān*] to build it up!

It cannot be built by your hands, O hypocrites. You are unworthy and unfit for the task. How can you do any building, when you possess neither the craft of the builder nor his tools? O ignorant ones, you must build up the walls of your own religion, and only then attend to the structures of other people.

If you treat me as your enemy, I shall treat you as enemies on behalf of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger, because I count on their support. Do not go beyond the bounds, for Allāh "has the upper hand in His affairs" (12:21). The brothers of Joseph (peace be upon him) tried to kill him, but they were unable to do it. How could they have done it, when he was a king in the sight of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), one of His Prophets [*nabiyyun min anbiyāʾ ihī*] and one of His champions of the truth [*ṣiddīqun min ṣiddīqihī*], for whom it

was preordained that the people should receive benefits at his hands? It is the same with you, O hypocrites of this day and age. You would like to destroy me, but you are fit for nothing and your hands are incapable of doing such a deed. Were it not for the rule of law [*hukm*], I would pick you off one by one. The rule of law is the fundamental consideration, whether one is operating in the sphere of the law or in the sphere of knowledge [*ilm*].

The people [of the Lord] are not afraid of creatures, because they are next to the safekeeping of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His care and His protection. They do not worry about their enemies, because they will soon be seeing them with their hands and feet amputated and their tongues cut out. They realize and know for a fact that creatures are feeble and incompetent, with no destructive power [*hulk*] or dominion [*mulk*] at their disposal, no power to enrich or to impoverish, no power to cause harm or bring benefit. As far as they [the people of the Lord] are concerned, there is no king except Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), no one possessing power or strength apart from Him, no giver and no withholder, no one harmful or beneficial apart from Him, no one who gives life and causes death apart from Him. They enjoy relief from the burden of idolatry [*shirk*]. They are in a state of having been chosen and selected, of enjoying intimate friendship [*uns*] with Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and relaxation in His company. Delighting in His refreshing atmosphere [*rawḥ*], His gentle kindness [*lutf*] and His confidential conversation [*munājāt*], they do not care whether this world exists or does not exist, whether the hereafter exists or does not exist, whether good and evil exist or do not exist.

At the first stage of their career, they had to make efforts to practice abstinence from this world, creatures and the desires of the flesh [*shahawāt*]. Then, when they had made this their regular practice, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) turned their effort-making into a natural inclination [*ṭabʿ*] and talent [*mawhibā*]. Abstinence became second nature. You must learn from them. Make the effort to practice acts of worshipful obedience [*ṭāʿāt*], and give up acts of sinful disobedience [*maʿāṣī*] and reprehensible behavior [*munkarāt*], then effort-making will become a natural inclination. You must try to understand the words of

your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), put them into practice and be sincere in your actions.

O young man! You are nothing but lower self [*nafs*], natural inclination [*ṭabʿ*] and passion [*hawā*]. You spend time in the company of strange women and boys, then you say: "I am not interested in them." You are lying. Neither sacred law [*sharʿ*] nor reason [*ʿaql*] will agree with you. You are adding fire to fire, firewood to firewood, so the house of your religion [*dīn*] and your faith [*īmān*] will surely be set ablaze. Disapproval of this by the sacred law is universally applicable, with no one being exempt from it.

You must acquire faith, experience [*maʿrifa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the strength of nearness, then become a physician to creatures, acting on behalf of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Woe unto you! How can you touch and handle snakes, when you are not expert in the art of snake-charming and have not taken the antidote [to their poison]? Blind, how can you treat people's eyes? Dumb, how can you teach people? Ignorant, how can you practice the religion [*dīn*]? If someone is not a chamberlain, how can he conduct people to the king's door? You are ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and of His power, His nearness and His way of governing [*siyāsa*] His creatures. What is not reasonable for me and what is reasonable for you, what is not correct for me and what is correct for you, these are matters the explanation of which is known only to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Hear and take note, for I am the herald of the King, the delegate [*nāʾib*] of His Messenger in your midst. The most brazen of creatures on behalf of the religion [*dīn*], I feel no inhibition toward you beside Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and beside His Messenger (may Allāh the Exalted bless him and give him peace). I am their employee, a day-laborer [*rūzkārī*] at their disposal, a subordinate of theirs.

This world is fleeting, transitory. It is the abode of disasters and misfortunes. It can offer no one a life free of care, especially if he is a wise man [*hakīm*]. As the saying goes, it offers no solace for the eye of the wise man, the eye of one who remembers death. If someone finds himself close up against a lion with its jaws wide open, how can he feel nice and

cozy and drop off to sleep? O heedless ones, the grave has its jaws open wide. The lion of death and its serpent have their jaws open wide. The executioner of the Sultan of Destiny [*qadar*] has his sword in his hand, as he awaits the command. Only one in a million has this kind of wisdom [*hikma*], vigilant without a trace of negligence.

In the initial stage of your career, you cannot do without some craft by which to make a living and earn your daily bread, while your faith is gaining strength. Then, if you keep this up and remain steadfast, the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will promote you to absolute trust [*tawakkul*], so that He feeds you without material means [*sabab*]. O you who idolatrously associate His material means with Him [*yā mushrik bi-sababihi*!]! If only you could experience eating because of absolute trust, you would not be guilty of idolatrous association. You would sit at His door, trusting in Him and relying upon Him. As far as I am aware, there are only two ways of getting food and drink: either through working to earn them, while observing the requirements of the sacred law [*sharʿ*], or through absolute trust [in the Lord].

Woe unto you! Are you not embarrassed in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? You give up the effort to earn your living and you go begging from other people. Earning is a starting point and absolute trust is a final stage, so I do not see you having either a beginning or an end. I am telling you the truth and I can face you without embarrassment. Hear and take heed, and do not quarrel with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). No creature is more detached than I am from you and your possessions, from your praise and your blame. If I accept anything from you, I take it for the sake of others, not for my own sake. My speaking to you is a necessary shock. I am commanded to do it through a channel I am familiar with. I am certain of its validity. The decree of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has no one to abrogate it or prevent it.

Woe unto you! You must not be misled by the things people say. You are well aware of what you are involved in and what you need to do. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Oh, but man is a telling witness against himself. (75:14)

How fine you appear in the sight of the common folk [*ʿawāmm*], and how ugly you are in the eyes of the élite [*khawāṣṣ*]. O you who are so

desirous of this world and take such pleasure in it, while laying claim to intelligence and accurate perception! Surely you have heard the words of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Know that the life of this world is only play, and idle talk, and pageantry.
(57:20)

Play and idle talk and pageantry are for ignorant youngsters, not for intelligent adults. He has let you know that they are for ignorant people who are mentally deficient. He has let you know that He did not create you for play. Anyone who is preoccupied with this world is merely playing games. Anyone who is satisfied with it, without regard for the hereafter, is satisfied with a nonentity. This world has nothing to offer you but snakes, scorpions and poisons, which you take with the hands of your lower selves [*nufūs*], the passions [*ahwiya*] and carnal desire [*shahwa*].

You must devote your attention to the hereafter. Bring your hearts back to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and devote your attention to Him, then take what He offers you from the hand of His gracious favor. You must consider this world and the hereafter and weigh them in the balance. If you were to acquire knowledge, whatever knowledge you acquired, there would be more than that with me. My seed has ripened and blossomed, while your seed has sprouted only to shrivel up. Be sensible! Leave your important position and come and sit over here, like a member of the group [*jamā'a*], so that my words can be planted in the ground of your heart. If you had any sense, you would sit in my company and be satisfied with a morsel from me every day, while putting up with my rough way of speaking. All those who have faith [*īmān*] will take root and develop, while those who have no faith will run away from me.

Sixty-second Discourse

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the last day of Rajab, A.H. 546, that the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) said:

Affirm the Oneness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) until not a single atom of the entire creation is left in your heart. You must see neither house nor homeland. The affirmation of Unity [*tawhīd*] must kill it all. The whole remedy lies in affirming that the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is One, and in shunning the serpent of this world. You must run away from this snake [*ḥayya*] until the Charmer [*ḥawwā'*] comes to you, for He will pull out its teeth and draw its poison. He will bring you close to Him and teach you His skill. He will make the serpent submissive to you. It will be rendered harmless, so that you can handle it while it cannot bite you. When you love the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and He loves you, He will keep you safe from the evil of this world, of carnal desires and lusts, the lower self [*nafs*], passions and devils, so you can receive your allotted shares without harm or confusion. O you who make claims without evidence, you so often pretend to affirm the Divine Unity, yet you are actually a polytheist [*mushrik*]. Can you come out with me at night for a walk through frightening places, with me unarmed and you carrying a weapon? Then you will see who is scared, you or I? Who will come under the aegis of the hereafter, you or I? You have been trained in hypocrisy [*nifāq*], while I have been trained in faith [*īmān*].

O my people! You go chasing after this world to get it to give you things, while it runs after the saints [*awliyā'*] of Allāh in order to give things to them. It stands in their presence with its head bowed low.

You must strike your lower self [*nafs*] with the scimitar [*ṣamṣāma*] of the affirmation of Unity, while wearing the helmet of helpful guidance

[*tawfiq*], and wielding the spear of sacred struggle [*mujāhada*], the shield of pious devotion [*taqwā*] and the sword of certitude [*yaqīn*], so as to engage it sometimes in thrusting and at other times in cutting action. You must keep this up until it submits to you humbly and you become its rider, holding its reins in your hand as you travel with it over land and sea. At this stage your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) will point to you with pride. Then you will be put in charge of those who remain stuck with their lower selves and have failed to escape from their control.

When someone really knows his own self [*man ‘arafa nafsahu*] and has gained mastery over it, it becomes a beast of burden for him, a camel that does not disobey his command. There is nothing good in you until you really know your lower self, restrain it from indulgence and give it its proper due. Only then will it become tame in relation to the heart, while the heart becomes tame in relation to the innermost being [*sirr*], and the innermost being becomes tame in relation to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must not spare your lower selves the rod of dedicated struggle. Do not be deceived by their cunning wiles. Do not be deceived by their pretending to be asleep. You must not be taken in by the apparent sleep of the predatory animal, for he is only letting you think he is asleep, while waiting to pounce upon his prey. This lower self will make a show of tameness, submissiveness, humility and compliance with what is good, while secretly contradicting all this. Beware of what it may get up to later on!

The people [of the Lord] are not really interested in ordinary creatures, but they go to the trouble of keeping an eye on them and spending time in their company, in order to instruct them in what they should and should not do. In their relationship to ordinary creatures, the people [of the Lord] may be likened to a set of people who wished to cross an ocean and reach a certain king. Some of them discovered a way through and made the passage, but when they had arrived in his presence, the king saw the rest of the people floundering about and almost drowning. They had not discovered the path which the first group had followed, so the king commanded those who had already reached him to go back to the others, in order to teach them the way by which they themselves had come. So they went and stood at the water's edge, and called out to them: "The way through is over here!" Thus they set about giving them directions, and once they got close

enough they took them by the hand. The basis of this can be found in His words (Exalted is He):

And he who believed said: "O my people! Follow me. I will guide you to the way of right conduct." (40:38)

The intelligent person amongst you will therefore not seek happiness in this world, nor in children, family, wealth, foodstuffs, articles of clothing, vehicles, or sexual opportunities. All of this is mere delusion. The believer [*mu'min*] finds happiness in the strength of his faith [*īmān*] and certitude [*yaqīn*], and in the arrival of his heart at the door of the nearness of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Surely the true kings of this world and the hereafter must be those who really know [*ʿarifūn*] Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and who work for His sake.

O young man! When will your heart become pure and serene, and when will your innermost being become pure and serene, as long as you are guilty of associating partners with Allāh [*mushrik*]? How can you prosper, as long as you spend every night picking on someone or other to chase after, complain to and beg from? How can your heart become pure and serene, as long as it is so devoid of the affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawhīd*] that it does not contain the slightest trace of it? The affirmation of Divine Unity is a radiant light, while the idolatrous worship [*shirk*] of creatures is a gloomy darkness. How can you prosper, as long as your heart is so devoid of pious devotion [*taqwā*] that it does not contain the slightest trace of it? You are screened off from the Creator by creatures, screened off by material means [*asbāb*] from the Originator [*Musabbib*], screened off by trust [*tawakkul*] in creatures and reliance on them. You are merely an unsubstantiated claim. No bouquet of sweet herbs is awarded on the strength of a claim with no proof.

This business can only be accomplished in one of two ways: The first is by dedicated struggle and exertion, by enduring things that are very difficult and very exhausting. This is the more usual way, as experienced by the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]. The second is a talent [*mawhibā*] that requires no effort, a rare gift belonging to a few individuals only. To such an individual He grants direct knowledge [*maʿrifā*] and love for Him. He takes him from the midst of his family and his occupation, and manifests His power [*qudra*] within him. He takes him away from highway robbery [*qaṭʿ at-tarīq*] and promotes him to the hermit's cell [*ṣawmaʿa*]. He expels all creatures from his heart and opens unto him the door of His

nearness. He takes him away from fantasy so that he is satisfied with next to nothing. He nourishes him with understanding, wisdom and dignity, so he begins to learn a lesson from everything he sees, to learn a lesson from everything he hears, and to practice only that which brings him near to Him. Now that he instructs others in right guidance [*hidāya*], providential care [*ʿināya*] and sufficiency [*kifāya*], they do not keep aloof from him. Applicable to him now are the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) concerning Joseph (upon him and upon our own Prophet be blessing and peace):

So it was, that We might ward off from him evil and lewdness; he was one of Our devoted servants. (12:24)

He drives evil and lewdness away from him and puts helpful guidance [*tawfiq*] at his service. The lover [*muḥibb*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) who has real knowledge [*ʿārif*] will use every device to give instruction to his fellow creatures. He will sometimes use his words to instruct them, sometimes his actions and at other times his spiritual influence [*himma*]. He will instruct them in ways they are not aware of, as well as in ways of which they are conscious.

O young man! You must attend to your personal condition as long as your faith [*īmān*] is still weak. Do not mind the business of your family, of the man and woman next door, of the folk in your town and district. Once your faith has grown strong, however, you must make an impression on your family and your children, then on the people at large. Do not make them notice you until after you have armed yourself with the armor of pious devotion [*taqwā*], keeping the helmet of faith on the head of your heart, the sword of the affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawḥīd*] in your hand, and in your quiver the arrows of the answer to prayers [*ijābat ad-duʿāʾ*]. You must ride the steed of helpful guidance [*tawfiq*] and learn the tactics of attack and retreat, of cut and thrust, then bear down upon the enemies of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). At this point you will receive support and assistance from all six directions [left and right, in front and behind, above and below]. You will snatch your fellow creatures from the hands of Satan and carry them to the gate of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will instruct them in the work of the people of the Garden [of Paradise], and warn them against doing the work of the people of the Fire [of Hell]. How

could it be otherwise, when you have experienced [*‘arafta*] the Garden and the Fire and really know their works?

When someone has attained to this station [*maqām*], the veils will be removed from the eye of his heart. Whether he looks to right or left, in front or behind, above or below, his gaze will pierce through and nothing will block his vision. He will lift up the head of his heart and see the Throne [*‘arsh*] and the heavens, and when he lowers it he will see all the levels of the earth and the habitations of the jinn upon it. All of this is the result of faith [*īmān*] and experience [*ma‘rifat*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), together with knowledge [*‘ilm*] of the law [*ḥukm*].

When you have attained to this station, you must summon your fellow creatures to the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), but nothing can come of you before this. If you invite the people when you are not yet at the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), your invitation to them will fall as a curse upon you. Whenever you try to move, you will find yourself on your knees. Whenever you seek promotion you will be demoted. You do not have a clue about the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]. You are mere babble. You are a tongue [*lisān*] without a soul [*janān*]. You are an outer [*ẓāhir*] with no inner [*bāṭin*], a public place [*jilwa*] with no private room [*khalwa*], a tour [*jawla*] with no force [*ṣawla*]. Your sword is made of wood and your arrows are matchsticks. You are a coward with no courage. The most trifling arrow would kill you. A tiny bug could mean the end of the world as far as you are concerned.

O Allāh, fortify our religion [*adyān*], our faith [*īmān*] and our bodies [*abdān*] with Your nearness, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

The Shaikh (may Allāh the Exalted be well pleased with him) also said:

There was a time when I did not sit in anyone’s company. Then, if I did so at all, I would sit with two or three of those who were agreeable to me. You must seek the fellowship of the people [of the Lord], for one of their attributes is that when they look at a person and focus their

spiritual influence [*himma*] upon him, they love him, even if the recipient of their attention happens to be a Jew [*Yahūdī*] or a Christian [*Naṣṛānī*] or a Zoroastrian [*Majūsī*]. If he happens to be a Muslim, he will grow in faith [*īmān*] and certitude [*yaqīn*] and firmness of conviction [*tathbīt*].

If the heart is sound, the vision will be sound. If the heart is sound, it must have drawn near to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When someone looks with the eye of nearness and direct knowledge [*maʿrifā*], his gaze comes to be from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). The nearness becomes a cloud within his heart, while the gaze is its lightning flash, and the transmitted teaching [*waʿz*] is its rain. His tongue gives expression to what is in his heart. His tongue becomes a pen, dipped in the inkwell of direct experience [*maʿrifā*] and the ocean of knowledge [*ilm*]. His speech and his gaze become the lightning flash of that which is in his heart. Both of them become manifest from a powerful source in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). If someone genuinely carries out the [divine] commandments, observes the [divine] prohibitions and earns the good pleasure of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace), he will truly experience this. As he continues to feel the effects of it, he will wander about in a daze, searching for the source that gave rise to the experience, until the immediate effects of it wear off and his knowledge [*ilm*] and his nearness are greater than ever.

Sincerity [*sidq*] in the quest for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the fruit of righteous deeds [*aʿmāl ṣāliha*]. Righteous work is that which is performed purely for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), with no one else associated [*sharīk*] in it. Righteous work will set you on the highroad of His will for you. Then you must travel straight along it, turning off neither to right nor left, with the footsteps of your heart, your innermost being [*sirr*] and your spiritual content [*maʿnā*]. You must travel entirely without company; not with creatures, not with this world and not with the hereafter. You will become one of those who seek only His countenance, and you will say, as Moses said:

And I hastened unto You, my Lord, that You might be well pleased.
(20:84)

When someone seeks the good pleasure of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His countenance, he comes to be as Allāh

(Almighty and Glorious is He) has said concerning Moses (peace be upon him):

And we had forbidden foster mothers to him before then (28:12).

Forbidden to the heart of this sincere lover [*muḥibb ṣādiq*] is the foster mother of every created fabrication [*muḥdath makhḷūq*] that is after it was not. The milk of all foster mothers will be dried up in his throat because of divine jealousy [*ghaira ilāhiyya*]. It all gets dried up. Everything is removed from his heart, so that he cannot be attached to anything apart from his Beloved. This experienced believer [*mu'min 'ārif*] will continue to earn the good pleasure of the Messenger [*rasūl*] by working with him, until he asks permission for his heart to enter the presence of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He will be like a servant [*ghulām*] ready to do his bidding, and then, when he has long been in his service, he will say: "O master [*ustādh*], show me the King's door. Employ me in His company. Let me stand in a place where I can see Him. Let my hands hold the ring of the door of His nearness." So his master will take him along with him and lead him near to the door, where he will be asked: "What have you with you there, O Muḥammad? What have you with you there, O emissary [*safīr*], O guide [*dalīl*], O teacher [*mu'allim*]?" And he will reply: "As You already know, a chicken [*furaikh*] I have trained and whom I now find ready for service at this door!" Then he will say to his [servant's] heart: "Here you are with your Lord," as Gabriel (peace be upon him) said to him when he carried him up to heaven and brought him near to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He): "Here you are with your Lord!"

O young man! Do righteous work and receive nearness to the Lord of the Worlds!

O young man! You must curtail your expectations and diminish your greedy ambition. Perform the prayer [*ṣalāt*] of one who is about to take his leave. It is not fitting for a believer [*mu'min*] to go to sleep without having his last will and testament written and placed under his head, for if the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) allows him to wake up in good health, he will be blessed, and if not, his family will find his testamentary disposition [*waṣīyya*] to their benefit after his death, and they will pray for him to receive the mercy of Allāh.

You should eat as someone about to take his leave would eat. You should be with your family as someone about to take his leave of them would be. When you meet with your brethren [*ikhwān*] you should do so like one who is about to take his leave of them. You must therefore instill in your heart: “I am someone who is about to take his leave.”

How can it not be like this for a person whose business is in the control of someone Other than himself?

Only a very few individuals among all creatures are given to know what will happen to them, what will become of them and at what time they will die. This is all stored within their hearts and they can see it as plainly as you can see the sun up there, but their tongues give no expression to it. The first to become aware of this is the innermost being [*sirr*]. Then the innermost being informs the heart, and the heart informs the tranquil self [*an-nafs al-muṭmaʿinna*], as a confidential secret. It is made aware of this after it has received its education and spent time in the service of the heart. One becomes qualified for this after dedicated struggles and sufferings. A person who has attained to this station [*maqām*] is the deputy [*nāʾib*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) on the earth and His vicegerent [*khalīfa*] upon it. He is the door to the mysteries [*bāb al-asrār*]. He holds the keys to the treasure houses of the hearts, they being the treasure houses of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). This is something beyond the comprehension of creatures. All that is visibly apparent about him is merely a speck of dust from his mountain, a drop of water from his ocean and a lamplight from his sun.

O Allāh, I beg pardon of You for speaking about these mysteries, although You know that I am overwhelmed [*maghlūb*].

As one of the righteous has said: “Beware of that for which one needs to apologize.” But when I get up on this platform I vanish from you all, and there is no one left in front of my heart for me to apologize to, or to make me wary of speaking to you. I ran away from you one time, only to fall into your midst. I made up my mind to spend each night in a different place, to travel from town to town and from village to village, and to be an exile in disguise until I died. This was what I wanted, but Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) wanted the very opposite, so I fell right into the middle of what I was trying to run away from.

When this heart is sound, and one's feet are firmly planted at the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), he falls into the trackless wilderness of origination [*takwīn*], into its valleys and into its ocean. He will have his being sometimes in his speech, sometimes in his spiritual influence [*himma*] and sometimes in his gaze. He becomes the action [*fi'l*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and is personally detached; he ceases to exist [*yafnā*], while He remains in being [*yabqā*]. There are just a few of you who believe in this. The majority of you are those who deny the truth of it. To believe in this and to put it into practice is an ultimate degree [*niḥāya*].

No one would negate the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], except a hypocrite [*munāfiq*], an impostor [*dajjāl*] riding on his passions [*hawā*]. This business is built on genuine conviction [*i'tiqād*], then on practice [*amal*]. If someone practices the outer form [*ẓāhir*] of the law [*ḥukm*], that practice will result in his having experience [*ma'rifa*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and knowledge [*ilm*] of Him. The law will come to be between him and creatures, and knowledge between him and his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). His outer actions [*a'māl ẓāhira*] will come to be a mere speck in relation to his inner actions [*a'māl bāṭina*]. His physical organs may be in repose, but his heart will not rest. The eyes in his head may fall asleep, but his heart will not slumber. His heart will go on working and remembering while he is asleep.

The story is told of how a certain righteous man was handling a string of prayer-beads [*subḥa*], using them to count his praises of the Lord [*yusabbiḥu biḥā*], until at some point he dozed off. Then he woke up again, and saw that the beads were circulating in his hand, while his tongue was still remembering his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

This heart receives a command, so it acts, and this innermost being [*sirr*] receives a command, so it performs inner actions.

And they have other works, besides that, which they are doing. (23:63)

Outer actions are appropriate for ordinary servants [*ibād*], since they relate to the limbs and organs of the physical body, while inner actions are appropriate for the élite [*khawāṣṣ*], since they relate to hearts and innermost beings [*asrār*]. The innermost of the innermost being [*sirr as-sirr*] is between them and Him, in a condition of fear despite their

nearness. They fear the vicissitudes of change in spiritual states [*aḥwāl*] and the loss of spiritual station [*maqām*]. They fear the transmutation [*maskh*] of hearts. They are afraid that their hearts may be transmuted, that their suns and their moons may be eclipsed, and that their feet may stumble. They are always hanging on to the knob of the door of His nearness and clinging to the hem of His mercy, as they implore Him: “Our Lord, what we want from You is neither this world nor the hereafter. All we want is pardon and well-being in our religion [*dīn*]. We want our faith [*īmān*] and knowledge [*maʿrifā*] to endure. Please grant us this favor. We have clung to the hem of your mercy, so do not dash the hopes we have placed in You. Cause this to be for us, for when You want something You say to it ‘Be!’—and it is.”

O my people! You must follow the people [of the Lord] in their words and their deeds. Serve them. Gain access to them with your goods and your persons. Everything you give them is yours, safe in their keeping. Tomorrow [at the Resurrection] they will hand it over to you. You wish for a life of luxury, but the pen [of destiny] has prerecorded straitened circumstances for you, so you are chastened and despised, since you are trying to get what has not been assigned to your lot. You go to such lengths in quest of this world, and you are so greedy, but no part of it belongs to you except the share that has been allotted to you. The people [of the Lord] have an attitude of worshipful obedience and their hearts are apprehensive, whereas your attitude is one of sinful disobedience and your hearts feel secure. This is the very essence of delusion. Be on your guard, in case He should seize you unawares!

The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

In every specialized craft [*ṣanʿa*], you should seek the help of a qualified expert.

This worshipful service [*ʿibāda*] is a specialized craft, and its qualified experts are those who are sincere [*mukhlīṣūn*] about their work, those who are learned [*ʿālimūn*] in the law [*ḥukm*] and who put it into practice [*ʿāmilūn*], those who take their leave of creatures after their experience [*maʿrifā*] of Him, those who flee from their own selves, from their possessions and their children and everything apart from their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), running on the feet of their hearts and

their innermost beings [*asrār*]. Their physical forms are in civilized surroundings among creatures, while their hearts are in the wastelands and deserts. They keep to this pattern until their hearts are well trained and their wings are strong enough to fly up into the sky. Their spiritual aspirations [*himam*] are lofty and their hearts soar up into the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so they come to be among those concerning whom Allāh has said:

And surely in Our sight they are among the chosen, the excellent.
(38:47)

When faith [*īmān*] has become certitude [*yaqīn*], certitude has become direct experience [*maʿrifa*], and direct experience has become knowledge [*ʿilm*], then you will become an expert [*jahbadh*] for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will take from the hand of the rich and give back to the poor. You will become the owner of the restaurant, dishing out nourishment with the hand of your heart and your innermost being [*sirr*]. You deserve no respect at all, O hypocrite, until you have come to be like this. Alas for you, you have not received instruction at the hand of a pious, abstinent Shaikh, learned in the law [*hukm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). Alas for you, you want something for nothing. It will not drop into your hand. When things of this world cannot be gained without strenuous effort, how about what is in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Where do you stand in relation to those whom Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has commended, in the precise terms of His Book, for worshipping Him so frequently? Of them he has said:

They used to sleep only a little during the night, and with the dawning of each day they would seek forgiveness. (51:17,18)

When He recognized the sincerity [*ṣidq*] of their dedication to His service, He appointed an agent to wake them up and arouse them from their beds. As the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say: “O Gabriel, make so and so get up, and put that other person to sleep.”

There are two ways of interpreting this. [First, as meaning:] “Make so and so get up, for he is sincere [*ṣādiq*] in his worshipful service, a fugitive

from his sins. Drive trouble and sleep away from him. And put that other person to sleep, for he is a hypocritical liar. He is falsehood within falsehood, a curse within a curse, so cast the spell of slumber upon him, so that I shall not see his face among those who stand upright.”

The other way of taking it would be: “Make so and so get up, for he is a lover [*muḥibb*] who is still seeking, and a necessary part of the lover’s condition is weary toil. And put that other person to sleep, because he is a beloved [*maḥbūb*], and a necessary part of the beloved’s condition is restful comfort. He must be allowed to sleep and rest, because he has been working night and day in order to fulfill his covenant and to prove himself true in his love. Since he has fully accomplished this, the moment has come for the fulfillment of the covenant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), because He has guaranteed rest in His company to all who are weary from toil on His behalf.”

As for the people [of the Lord], when the footsteps of their hearts have finally led them to their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), they will see in their sleep what they never saw in their state of wakefulness. Their hearts and their innermost beings [*asrār*] will see something they cannot see while they are awake. They have fasted [*ṣāmū*] and prayed [*ṣallaw*], they have fought their lower selves by subjecting them to hunger and disgrace, and they have labored night and day to perform all kinds of worshipful service [*‘ibādāt*], until the Garden [of Paradise] has come to be theirs. But now that it is theirs, they will be told: “The way is not this. It is the quest for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).” Their work must come to be performed in the sphere of their hearts, then when it reaches Him it will be confirmed and authenticated in His sight.

When someone knows what he is looking for, he attaches little importance to the energy and effort he devotes to the obedient service of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). The believer [*mu’min*] never ceases to labor until he meets his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Woe unto you! You claim to be my disciple, yet you keep your property hidden from me. You are lying when you make such a claim. The disciple [*murīd*] has neither shirt nor turban, neither gold nor money to his name in relation to his Shaikh. He just eats at his table whatever he tells him to eat. He has no existence of his own [*huwa fānin*

‘*anhu*], as he waits for his Shaikh to tell him what he must do and what he must not do, because he acknowledges that this comes from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). His best interests are being looked after by his Shaikh, and he is held on a tight rein.

If you harbor any doubts about your Shaikh, you should not stay in his company, for it will do you no good to share his fellowship or become his disciple. When a sick person has doubts about his physician, he cannot be cured by his treatment.

After some discussion, the Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) went on to say:

When someone has achieved genuine detachment [*zuhd*] from creatures, it is correct for them to feel attracted to him. They can derive benefit from hearing what he has to say and from paying attention to him.

When you know creatures through knowledge [*‘ilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and experience them through experience [*ma‘rifā*] of Him, their attributes will disappear from you. Jinn and human beings and angels will vanish from you. Your heart will assume a different character, as will your innermost being [*sirr*]. The shell of your existence [*wujūd*] will be removed from you, the shell of the usual custom [*‘āda*] of the children of Adam (peace be upon him). The law [*ḥukm*] will come and form a gown for you to wear, so you will go about the earth clothed, commanding yourself and all fellow creatures of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) to obey His commandment. Knowledge Lordly and Divine [*al-‘ilm ar-rabbānī al-ilāhī*] will come and form a garment over your heart and your innermost being [*sirr*].

You must hold fast to what the Messenger [*rasūl*] has brought you, namely the Book and the Sunna, for anyone who abandons these two is guilty of atheism [*tazandaqa*] and has strayed from the fold of Islām. The fire and torment [of Hell] will therefore be his resort in the long term, while in the short term he is treated as an abomination.

The heart that knows by experience [*qalb ‘arīf*] has something else in its relationship with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), after implementing the law [*iḥkām al-ḥukm*] and actually standing at the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Such then

is he who deserves to be followed and to have his words heeded, and this is why it is forbidden to follow those who do not implement the law, because it is something that cannot be dispensed with. It is fundamental to this business that one must implement the [divine] commandment in practice and in all sincerity [*ikhlaṣ*], and must teach it to other people. This makes one great in the sight of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and this is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

If someone learns [*ta'allama*], practices [*'amala*] and teaches [*'allama*], he will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven [*malakūt*].

You must not retire to your hermit's cell with ignorance for company, because to isolate yourself from your fellow creatures in a state of ignorance is a great and total perversion. This is why the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) has said:

Complete your studies [*tafaqqah*], then you may retire.

It is not appropriate for you to withdraw into the hermit's cell, as long as there is anyone upon the face of the earth whom you fear and on whom you pin your hopes. There should be no one left as far as you are concerned, apart from One who is feared and One who is looked to in hope, namely Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). I recognize only Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and the observance of His religion [*dīn*] as the way to draw near to Him. I observe His religion and I support it for His sake, not for the sake of any other.

The champion of the truth [*ṣiddīq*] has heard the crier of the religion calling out to summon his heart and his innermost being [*sirr*]. When the common folk [*'awāmm*] transgress its limits, when they ignore its prohibitions, give up following its commandments and turn their backs upon it, he can hear how that voice is crying out and appealing to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) for assistance. So he sets to work with a will and stands ready in his presence, helping him to command what is right and fair [*ma'rūf*] and to forbid what is wrong and unfair [*munkar*], giving him good advice and coming to his defence. He does this with the strength of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), not with the strength of his own lower self [*nafs*], his passions [*hawā*], his natural impulses [*tab'*], his recklessness [*ru'ūna*], his stupidity [*jahāla*] and his hypocrisy [*nifāq*].

Worshipful service [*‘ibāda*] means giving up habitual behavior [*‘āda*]. There can be no habitual conduct until you come to be in the situation of worshipful service. You must do away with attachment to this world and the hereafter, and become attached to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not try to pass counterfeit coins, for the assayer has a sharp eye. He will accept nothing from you without applying the touchstone [*miḥakk*]. Take that counterfeit stuff you carry around with you and toss it away. Do not regard it as having any value. Nothing will be accepted from you [as precious metal] unless it has been exposed to the goldsmith's bellows and purified of dross, so do not imagine this to be an easy business. Most of you would claim to be sincere, but are actually hypocrites. Were it not for the examination [*imtiḥān*], the claims would be more numerous still. If someone lays claim to tolerance [*ḥilm*], we put him to the test by provoking him to anger. If someone lays claim to generosity [*karam*], we put him to the test by making demands of him. Whatever a person lays claim to, we test him with its opposite.

You must rid yourselves of crazy delusion and practice pious devotion [*taqwā*] under all circumstances. To the piously devoted [*muttaqūn*] belongs the Lord. You must conscientiously avoid [*ittaḡū*] the association of partners with Him [*shirk*], at the root, and sins of disobedience in the branch. Then cling to the two ropes that are the Book and the Sunna, and never let them slip from your hands.

The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is Generous [*Karīm*]; He does not impose a double fear upon a servant. The people [of the Lord] have already experienced their fear in this world, in connection with their eating and drinking, finding clothes to wear, getting married, and all their functions and dealings. They have given up everything that is unlawful [*ḥarām*] or dubious [*shubha*], as well as much of that which is lawful [*ḥalāl*], from fear of the reckoning [*ḥisāb*] of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the prospect of severe chastisement. They have exercised pious restraint in their eating and drinking and in every area of their lives. They gave things up by abstaining from them, then when abstinence [*zuḥd*] was firmly established it became a real experience [*ma‘rifā*], and when the real experience was firmly established it became the knowledge [*‘ilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and so it became a crown upon their heads. What is certain, therefore,

is that everything belonging in the categories of the unlawful, the dubious, or the indifferently permissible [*mubāh*] has come to be out of bounds for them, so they are left with the absolutely lawful [*ḥalāl ṭīlq*], that which is so unmistakably lawful to the champions of the truth [*ṣiddīqūn*] that they are not suspicious of it or worried about it at all.

When the servant has renounced both this world and the hereafter, and has forsaken everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and when his heart has found its way to the abode of His nearness, His favors and His gracious kindness, He does not burden him with having to procure food, drink, clothing or any of his needs. He relieves his heart of all such preoccupations. The hearts of those brought near [to Him] are constantly absorbed in the book of nearness and special knowledge [*‘ilm khāṣṣ*], which teaches their hearts and their innermost beings [*asrār*] to become extinct [*fanā’*] to willful desires [*irādāt*] and to fall prostrate [*istiṭrāḥ*] in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Thus He takes care of them and will not entrust them to anyone other than Himself. He makes them disappear beyond the comprehension of creatures, beyond this visible realm [*zāhir*]. Then, if He so wills, He resurrects them and sends them back out again.

The first knowledge [*‘ilm*] is corroborated by the second knowledge. Ignorance, then knowledge, then practice plus sincerity [*ikhlās*]. Then a second knowledge and a second practice. A silence and then an utterance. An extinction [*fanā’*] to yourself, then an existence [*wujūd*] in Him.

O you who are dead at heart, what is the point of your sitting here in my presence? O slaves of this world and its potentates, O slaves of the rich, O slaves of extravagance and indulgences [*rukhaṣ*], woe unto you! Even if the price of a grain of wheat should rise as high as one dīnār [gold coin], the believer [*mu’min*] would not get worried or feel concerned about his sustenance, because of the strength of his certitude [*yaqīn*] and his trusting reliance on his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not count yourself among the believers. Away with you!

All things are the soldiers of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and his scourges. The avoidance of creatures is correct [*ḥaqḡ*], and devotion to their Creator is even more correct [*aḥaqḡ*]. It seems to me that you fail to grasp what I am saying. You must follow the indications of the

affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawhīd*] and pay close attention to the words of the champions of truth [*ṣiddīqūn*] and the saints [*awliyāʾ*]. Their speech is like inspiration [*wahy*] from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). They speak on His behalf and at His command, beyond the competence of the common herd [*ʿawāmm ṭaghām*]. You are crazy. You compose your speech from the books and then deliver it. If you lost your written notes, what would you do? What if your books caught fire? Or if the lamp you see to read by went out, if your jar broke and the ink got spilled, where would you find your flint, your tinderbox, your matches and your assistant?

When someone acquires knowledge, puts it into practice and does so sincerely, his flint and his assistant come to be within his heart, a light from the light of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). He can then provide illumination for himself and for others.

Away with you, O sons of babble, O sons of pages composed by the hands of the lower selves [*nufūs*] and the passions [*ahwiya*]! Woe unto you, you are quarreling with the lucky one [*maḥẓūz*]. You will be crushed and destroyed and will fail to achieve your own good fortune. How can the preordainment [*sābiqa*] and foreknowledge [*ʿilm*] be altered by your effort? You must be believers who surrender themselves [*muʾminūn muslimūn*]. Surely you have heard His words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Those who believed in Our signs and had surrendered themselves.
(43:69)

The reality [*ḥaqīqa*] of Islām is submissive obedience [*istislām*]. The people [of the Lord] have thrown themselves prostrate before the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They have forgotten “Why?” and “How?” and “Do” and “Don’t.” They perform works of obedient service [*ṭāʿāt*] of all kinds, and their attitude is one of fearfulness. This is why the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has described them approvingly in these words of His:

They give that which they give with hearts afraid. (23:60)

[In other words:] “They carry out the commandments of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and observe His prohibitions. They endure with patience the tests I set them and they are grateful for the

gifts I give them. They surrender [*yusallimūna*] their own selves, their goods, their children and their reputations into the hand of My preordainment, while their hearts are timorous, afraid of Me.”

When the knower [*‘ārif*] abstains from the hereafter, he says to it: “Get out of my way, for I am seeking the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Both you and this world are one as far as I am concerned. This world used to screen me off from you, and now you are screening me off from my Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). No respect is due to anyone who tries to screen me off from Him.”

You must hear what is being said to you now, for it is the essence [*lubb*] of the knowledge [*‘ilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), the essence of what He wishes from His creatures and for His creatures, namely the spiritual state [*ḥāl*] of the Prophets [*anbiyā’*], the Messengers [*mursalūn*], the saints [*awliyā’*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]. O slaves of this world, O slaves of the hereafter, you are ignorant of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), of this lower world of His and of His other world. You are solid walls. Each of you has an idol [*ṣanam*]. You there, your idol is this world. And you, your idol is the hereafter. As for you, creatures are your idol. Then in your case, the desires and pleasures of the flesh are your idol, while in yours the idol is praise and applause and popular acceptance. Everything apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is an idol. The people [of the Lord] wish only for His countenance.

This world and the hereafter should be partaken of at the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They should be consumed in the clinic of the physician, who will take what he needs from each to feed the invalid. O hypocrites, you do not have a clue about this. The hypocrite is incapable of hearing a single word of this. It is the end of the world for him, because he cannot hear the truth [*ḥaqq*]. My words are true, and I am in the right [*‘alā ḥaqq*]. What I am saying comes from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), not from me; from the sacred law [*shar‘*], not from fantasy. But you are sadly lacking in the faculty of understanding!

Woe unto you! You have acquired knowledge, but you have failed to put your knowledge into practice, so how can your knowledge bring you any benefit? You have not served the Shaikhs in your youth, so how can you serve them now that you are adults?

There is not a believer [*mu'min*] whose eyes will not be uncovered at death, so that he can see what belongs to him in the Garden [of Paradise]. The dark-eyed damsels [*hūr al-'ain*] and young servants will beckon to him. The sweet perfume of the Garden will reach him, so death and its agonies [*sakarāt*] will seem pleasant to him. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) does to them [the believers] what he did to Āsiya (peace be upon her). Some of them are aware of this before death, namely those who are brought near [to the Lord] [*muqarrabūn*], singled out [*mufradūn*] and sought after [*murādūn*].

Woe unto you, O you who resist the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)! Cut out that useless ranting and raving. No one can reverse the decree of destiny [*qaḍā'*] and no one can deflect it. Submit [*sallim*] and you will find peace. This night and this day, is it possible for you to turn them back? When the night comes it will set in whether you are happy about it or not, and the same applies to the day. Each of them takes its course without reference to you, and so it is with the decree [*qaḍā'*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His destiny [*qadar*], whether to your advantage or to your disadvantage. When the night of poverty comes, you must submit and say goodbye to the day of affluence. When the night of sickness comes, you must submit and say goodbye to the day of good health. When the night of what you dislike comes, you must submit and say goodbye to the day of what you like. You must welcome with a tranquil heart the night of sicknesses, ailments, poverty and disgrace. Do not reject any part of the decree of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for if you do you will perish, your faith [*īmān*] will be lost, your heart will be thrown into murky confusion, and your innermost being [*sirr*] will die. As Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in one of His Books:

I am the One God [*Allāh*], except for Whom there is none worthy of worship [*ilāh*]. If someone submits obediently [*istaslama*] to My decree, endures My tribulation with patience, and gives thanks for My blessings, I shall record Him in My presence as a champion of the truth [*siddiq*]. And if someone does not submit obediently to My decree, does not endure My tribulation with patience, and does not give thanks for My blessings, then let him seek a lord [*rabb*] apart from Me.

If you are not willing to accept the decree, if you do not endure the tribulation with patience, and if you do not give thanks for the gracious

blessings, then you have no Lord. You may try to find some other Lord instead of Him, but there is no other Lord besides Him. If you wish [for Him], you must be willing to accept the decree [*qadā'*] and believe in destiny [*qadar*], both the good parts of it and the bad, both the sweet parts of it and the bitter. You must also believe that what has fallen to your lot could not have been avoided by taking precautions, and that what has passed you by could not have been made to come your way, however diligently you sought to acquire it.

When faith [*īmān*] has become a reality [*taḥaqquqa*] for you, you will move forward to the door of saintship [*wilāya*], for at this stage you will have come to be one of those servants of Allāh who really carry out their servitude [*'ubūdiyya*] to Him. The distinctive feature of the saint [*walī*] is that he is ready to comply with the wishes of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances. He becomes total compliance [*muwāfaqa*], with no question of why or how, while always carrying out the commandments and observing the prohibitions [of the sacred law]. There can be no doubt that he will always enjoy His fellowship. He will proceed in the company of His nearness, turning neither to right nor left and never going backwards, but only straight ahead. He will come to be a front without a back, a nearness with no remoteness, a pure serenity with no murky confusion, a goodness with no evil.

As for you, your hopes are pinned on creatures and they are the object of your fear. This makes you guilty of associating partners [*shirk*] with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Your praise goes to creatures when you are given things, and your blame is directed at them when things are withheld from you. This also amounts to attributing partners to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Woe unto you! No part of this should be directed toward them. There is nothing good about you. You are quite without realization of the Divine Unity [*taḥwīd*]. All things are brought into being by Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and are received from Him, not from His creatures. They are received on the return journey to His door, after the way to Him had been blocked. The material means [*sabab*] is at the initial stage, the Originator [*Musabbib*] at the final stage. The novice expects to get what he wants from the material means, just as a baby bird will look to the father or mother bird to provide it with food. When it

has grown and learned to fly, however, it can manage without them. It relies on the strength of its own wings and goes looking for food all by itself. Has any one of you ever taken a bite to eat from the hand of his absolute trust [*tawakkul*] in his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), without resorting to his own power and strength or to creatures and his reliance on them?

Woe unto you! You claim to possess what you do not have in you. How can you lay claim to Islām, faith [*īmān*], conviction [*īqān*] and the affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawhīd*], as long as you have such confidence in your own power and strength and in your material means? Be sensible! This business does not come about through mere claims.

Woe unto you! You sit up here and preach to the people, then you mingle with them to laugh and tell funny stories. There can be no doubt that neither you nor they will prosper. The preacher [*wāʿiẓ*] is an instructor and an educator, while those in his audience are like young children. A youngster will not study unless one is tough with him and treats him firmly and sternly. There are no more than a few individuals among them who can keep up their studies without this kind of treatment, being gifted with a special talent [*mawhiba*] from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Many of those who profess Islām outwardly will actually say, as the unbelievers [*kuffār*] have said:

Surely there is nothing but our life in this world; we die and we live, and nothing destroys us but time. (45:25)

This is what they said, and many of those I am referring to would say the same. They make it obvious by the actions that mark their behavior, so in my estimation they amount to nothing and they have less than the weight of a mosquito's wing to show in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They have no intelligence and possess no faculty of discrimination by which to tell the difference between what is harmful and what is beneficial.

[Let us consider] what He (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said in the story of Joseph (peace be upon him):

Allāh forbid that we should seize anyone except him with whom we found our property. (12:79)

What if someone is found in possession of the property of saintship [*wilāya*], the affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawhīd*] and faith [*īmān*]? When the heart is worthy of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), He does not leave it in the sphere of creatures and material means. He does not let it stay in the sphere of buying and selling, of trading in material means. He singles it out for special attention, saves it, raises it up from its fallen state, lodges it at His door and lets it sleep in the chamber of His gracious favor.

Woe unto you! The shirt of your Islām is torn to shreds. The robe of your faith [*īmān*] is soiled. You are naked. Your heart is ignorant. Your innermost being [*sirr*] is confused. Your breast is not opened wide to Islām. Your inner [*bāṭin*] is a wasteland while your outer [*ẓāhir*] is flourishing. Your record sheets have all been written on. This world of yours, which you love so much, is about to move away from you, while the grave and the hereafter are coming toward you. Wake up and pay attention to the state of your affairs and what you will soon have to face. Your death may happen today, or even in this very hour, intervening between you and your expectations. You will not find or catch up with the things you hope for from this world, while the things of the hereafter which you have neglected will catch up with you.

To be preoccupied with anything other than Allāh is craziness, and it is craziness to fear and pin one's hopes on any other than Him. There is no one who can either cause us harm or bring us benefit, apart from Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), for it is He who has assigned a material means [*sabab*] to each and every thing. The law [*ḥukm*] applies to the material means. If you act in accordance with the law, you will thereby make the action correct. The material means [*asbāb*] will then fall away from you as leaves fall from the tree. The Originator [*Musabbib*] will become manifest and the material means will disappear. The kernel [*lubb*] will become manifest and the shell will disappear. The kernel is dependence on the Originator; He is the root, while it is like the fruit from the tree.

One who realizes the Divine Unity [*muwahḥid*] will progress through the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*]. He will progress from the waterskin to the irrigation canal, from the irrigation canal to the river, and from the river to the ocean. He will progress from the branch to the root, from the child [*walad*] to the parent [*wālid*], from the servant [*‘abd*] to the master

[ma' būd], from the art [ṣan' a] to the artist [ṣāni'], from the incompetent [ʿājiz] to the capable [qādir], from poverty to affluence, from weakness to strength, from little to much.

Do not adopt a superior attitude toward me. Most of you have hearts that are devoid of faith [īmān], and each and every one of you has some pressing need in his lower self [naḥs], so let him rein it in with the bridle of silence and good behavior, and let him arm it with the armor of pious devotion [taqwā], for this is the means by which it can achieve tranquillity [ṭama' nīna] and attain to its Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Attainment [wuṣūl] is of two kinds, the common [ʿāmm] and the special [khaṣṣ]. The common kind is attainment to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) after death, while the special kind is the attainment of the hearts of a few rare individuals to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) even before death. These are the ones who struggle to combat their own lower selves [anfus] by opposing them in every way, and who become detached from creatures in all that relates to harm and benefit. If they make a constant practice of this, they attain to Him [in this life], just as the common folk [ʿawāmm] attain to Him after death. When someone has truly experienced this, he will obtain mastery [tamakkun] and ease [baṣṭ], and will enjoy mutual conversation [muḥādatha] and entertainment [mu' ānasa] [in the presence of the Lord]. Then he who has attained to this [hādha' l-wāṣil] will say:

And come to me with all your folk. (12:93)

When Joseph (peace be upon him) had emerged from the well and the prison, and had borne those hardships with patience, and when he had acquired authority and everything was at his disposal, he said to his brothers:

And come to me with all your folk. (12:93)

[This was] when wealth and dominion had come to him, when hardship [qabḍ] had departed and ease [baṣṭ] had arrived. Prior to that he had been speechless in the well and the prison; it was only after he emerged that he acquired fluency of speech.

O my people! You must seek everything from the Creator of all things. You must devote the whole of you to the quest for Him. The people [of the Lord] have sacrificed their spirits [arwāḥ] in the quest for the nearness of their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). They realized

Who it was they were seeking, so they attached little importance to the sacrifice of their spirits. When a person knows what he is seeking, he attaches little importance to what he must sacrifice for it.

There is a story about a man who once happened to be passing by the private quarters of a slave trader [*nakhkhās*], where he caught sight of a very attractive slave girl. She so captivated his heart that he was quite unable to press on and leave the place behind. Well, he had beneath him a horse worth a hundred *dīnārs* [gold coins], he had beautiful clothes on his person, he had in his belt a sword embellished with gold, and he had a black slave in his service to carry the trappings. So he approached the girl's owner and asked him to make a deal.

"Without a doubt," her owner said to him, "you have fallen in love with my slave girl. The lover will sacrifice all that he possesses in the quest for his beloved, and I shall only sell her to you in exchange for everything you have in your possession at this very moment."

The man at once dismounted from his horse, stripped off all the clothes he was wearing, borrowed a shirt from the slave trader, and handed the whole lot over to him, together with the slave he had in his own service. Then he took the slave girl and made his way home, barefooted and bareheaded. Having paid the price, he took what was valued at that price. He really knew [*ʿarafa*] what he was looking for, so he attached little importance to what he would have to sacrifice. When someone is sincere [*ṣādiq*] about love, he will not stick with anyone but his beloved. Suppose some creature were to say: "I have heard tell of the Garden [of Paradise] and the bliss it contains, through the words of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He):

And therein is all that souls desire and eyes find sweet. (43:71)

—So what does it cost?" Our reply to him would be: "Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Allāh has bought from the believers their persons and their goods, the Garden [of Paradise] being theirs for the price. (9:111)

—You must surrender [*sallim*] self [*nafs*] and property, then it will come to be yours."

Suppose someone else were to say: "I wish to be one of those who seek His countenance. My heart has caught a glimpse of the door of His nearness, and has seen the lovers going into it and coming out of it

wearing the robes of honor conferred by the King. So what is the price of entry?" To him we would reply: "You must sacrifice the whole of you. You must give up your carnal appetites and pleasures. You must become so absorbed in Him that you cease to exist [*wa'fna fihi 'anka*]. You must say goodbye to the Garden [of Paradise] and all that it contains, and leave it behind. You must say goodbye to the lower self [*nafs*], to passions [*hawā*] and natural inclinations [*tab'*]. You must say goodbye to desires both worldly and otherworldly. You must say goodbye to everyone and leave them all behind the back of your heart. Then you may enter, and then you will see things that no eye has ever seen, that no ear has ever heard of, and that have never occurred to any human heart." When someone has fully experienced this, and the feet of his heart are firmly planted in it, both this world and the hereafter will belong to him. He will have them both as a sheer blessing [*nī'ma*] with no curse [*niqma*]. They will receive him as a welcome guest, and his reward will be nearness [to the Lord] and the sight [of Him]. The nearness he will experience in this world, with his heart, and the sight he will experience on the Day of Resurrection [*yawm al-qiyāma*], with his eye.

O young man!

Say "Allāh!," then leave them to their idle prattling. (6:97)

Say:

He who created me, and He guides me. (26:78)

O you who abstain from this world, when your heart moves away from it, seeking the hereafter, say:

He who created me, and He guides me. (26:78)

And you, O seeker of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), you who are longing for Him and abstaining from everything apart from Him, when your heart moves away from the door of the Garden [of Paradise] to go looking for its Master [*Mawlā*], say:

He who created me, and He guides me. (26:78)

You must pay close attention to His guidance [*hidāya*] over the rugged stretches of the path. O you who wish to travel by these two paths [the one of this world and the other of the hereafter], you must seek

directions from those who have trodden them both and are very familiar with the danger spots along them. I am referring to those Shaikhs who put their knowledge into practice and are sincere [*mukhliṣūn*] in all their deeds.

O young man! You must be the attendant servant of the guide. Follow him and leave your itinerary in his hands as you travel together with him, sometimes on his right, sometimes on his left, sometimes behind him and sometimes out in front of him. You must never go beyond his sight, and never contradict what he tells you, for then you will arrive at your destination and will not wander off and lose your way. You must affirm the Oneness [*waḥḥid*] of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you will be shielded from worries, and cares will no longer trouble you. When Abraham (peace be upon him) was placed in the catapult [*manjanīq*], to be slung into the fiery furnace, he ignored all intermediaries and would not turn to anyone other than his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Of course He said to the fire:

O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham. (21:69)

[In other words:] “O fire, away with you! Change and be transformed. Get rid of your heat and your malice. Get rid of your spear and your sword, your heat and your anger. You must dissipate and dissolve. Become a coolness and a chill that can do no harm.”

All of this was possible through the blessed grace of the affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawḥīd*] and sincerity [*ikhhlās*], in making that affirmation. When the servant affirms the Oneness of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and is sincere in doing so, it sometimes happens that He exercises His creative power on his behalf [*yukawwinu lahu*], so that the servant enters into His creative action [*takwīn*]. At other times He will put the creative power at His servant’s disposal, so that he can exercise it on his own behalf [*yukawwinu huwa li-nafsihi*]. This He does only for His special favorites [*khawāṣṣ*] among His creatures. Everyone who enters the Garden [of Paradise] will experience saying to a thing “Be!”—and having it come into being. Our present discussion is about the exercise of creative power in the here and now, not in the future. Abraham (peace be upon him) always had an attitude of absolute trust [*tawakkul*], both when he was little and in his adult life.

When people are holding themselves aloof from their neighbors and others, when you have more mouths to feed at the same time as you are facing poverty and straitened circumstances, while prices are becoming inflated and your brothers are shutting their doors in your faces, you are going to remember what I am saying to you now. You will remember and you will be sorry. Listen and learn from me, for I am an agent [*nā'ib*] acting on behalf of the Messenger [*rasūl*] and the One who gave him his mission [*man arsalahu*].

O my God [*yā ilāhī*], I beg You for pardon [*'afw*] and well-being [*'āfiya*] in performing this agent's task [*niyāba*]. Help me to carry out this business I am engaged in. You have taken the Prophets [*anbiyā'*] and Messengers [*rusul*] unto Yourself and You have left me standing in the front rank. I must bear the brunt of Your creatures, so I beg You for pardon and well-being. Shield me from the evil of all devils among human beings and jinn, and from the evil of all created beings. Āmīn.

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also went on to say:

O pious abstainers, O servants, you must be sincere, otherwise do not try to follow. You have acquired a fondness for fasting [*ṣawm*] and performing the prayer [*ṣalāt*], and for roughing it where food and clothing are concerned, but without conscious intention [*niyya*] or sincerity [*ikhhlās*]. In fact, the lower self [*nafs*] comes into it and the passions are involved.

Woe unto you! The practice of the people [of the Lord] comes from somewhere beyond all that, from the region of their hearts. They move in step with destiny [*qadar*], in fellowship with the law [*ḥukm*] and in keeping with its rules, in both the outer [*ẓāhir*] and the inner [*bāṭin*], in private and in public, in their relations with both the Creator and His creatures. They acknowledge the worth of every worthy person and give every deserving person his due. They pay due respect to the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), to the Sunna of His Prophet and to the knowledge [*ilm*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) that resides in their hearts. They respect the rights [*ḥuqūq*] of the family, the right [*ḥaqq*] of the self [*nafs*], the right of the heart and the rights of all creatures. They are in a position to delegate authority and to

empower, to imprison and to set free, to receive and to grant. They require observance of the rules of law [*hudūd*] by hearts and innermost beings [*asrār*] and lower selves [*nufūs*]. They call their fellow creatures to account. This is something far beyond the scope of your affairs and the range of your knowledge.

If the believer [*mu'min*] offers sound advice to his brother, but he will not take instruction from him, he should say to him: "You will surely remember what I am telling you. I now delegate my concern in the matter to Allāh." Someone who has real knowledge [*ʿarīf*] will combat the lower selves [*nufūs*] of his fellow creatures with the sword of his affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawhīd*] and his experience [*maʿrifā*]. If he takes any of them prisoner, he will conduct them to the door of his King, who is Aware [*Baṣīr*] of His servants.

There is nothing dearer to the believer [*mu'min*] than worshipful service [*ʿibāda*]. The thing that is most dear to him is getting up to perform the prayer [*ṣalāt*]. While he is sitting at home, his heart will be waiting for the muezzin [*mu'adhdhin*], who is the caller [*dāʿī*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When he hears the call to prayer [*adhān*], a feeling of happiness enters his heart and he flies off to the large congregational mosques [*jawāmiʿ*] or to the smaller places of worship [*masājid*]. He rejoices when a beggar comes his way; if he has anything on him he gives it to him, because he has heard the words of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace):

The beggar is the gift [*hadiyya*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to His servant.

How could he fail to rejoice, having carried out the commandment of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) when He was asking him for a loan by way of the poor man's hand?

Such are the proper forms of behavior [*ādāb*] for the worshipful believer [*mu'min ʿābid*]. As for one who has real knowledge [*ʿarīf*], he always keeps to the rules of the sacred law [*hudūd ash-sharʿ*], and keeps his heart from being penetrated by anything other than his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is wary of looking into his heart, in case he should see within it the fear of someone other than Him, hope pinned on someone other than Him, and reliance placed on someone other than Him. He keeps his heart clear of contamination by creatures and material means [*asbāb*]. He dislikes having to meet with creatures, but

he cannot avoid them, because they are sick and he is their physician. He cares neither for life in this world nor for life in the hereafter, but glories in the nearness of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), for He is all that he longs for and would willingly choose. The Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

On the Day of Resurrection, Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say to His believing servants: “You have preferred your life hereafter to your worldly life, and you have preferred My worship to your carnal desires. By My Glory [*‘izzatī*] and My Majesty [*jalālī*], I did not create My Garden [of Paradise] for anything but your benefit!”

This is what He will say to these [believing servants]. As for those who are his lovers [*muḥibbūn*], this is what He will say to them: “You have preferred Me to all My creatures, to My lower world and to My other world. You have dismissed all creatures from your hearts and banished them from your innermost beings [*asrār*], so this My countenance is for you, My nearness is for you, and you are My servants in very truth.”

Among the saints [*awliyā’*] there are some who partake in their own day of the food and drink of the Garden [of Paradise] and who see everything that it contains. Then there are those who pass beyond eating and drinking, become detached from creatures and invisible to them, and continue to inhabit the earth without dying, like Ilyās and Khidr. Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has a considerable number of such invisible ones on the earth, able to see people while people cannot see them. The saints [*awliyā’*] among them constitute a majority, while the eminent figures [*a’yān*] among them are a small minority, just a few isolated individuals, whose favor everyone comes seeking. It is through their agency that the earth becomes fruitful, that rain falls from the sky, and that creatures are shielded from disaster.

The food and drink of the angels [*malā’ika*] is the remembrance [*dhikr*] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), the proclamation of His Glory [*tasbīḥ*] and the declaration of His Uniqueness [*tahlīl*]: the utterance of the words *lā ilāha illa’ llāh*, [meaning “There is none worthy of worship except the One Almighty God.”] For a few individuals among the saints [*awliyā’*] this comes to be their food also.

What do you get out of listening to this? Most of you are the slaves of Iblīs and the delight of his eye. No respect is due to you or to him! O monk [*dairī*], you and the rest of you must leave his service and part

company with him. Enter the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) with the feet of your hearts, and beg Him to show you how you can earn His good pleasure. Beg Him to employ you in His service. Beg Him to show you the way to a treasure that can never be exhausted, to a spring that will never run dry. Beg Him to make this world hateful to you, and to make you love the hereafter. Then, when He has granted you these blessings, beg Him to make the hereafter hateful to you, and to grant you the blessings of working for His sake, of loving Him and of shunning everything apart from Him.

You are the slave of creatures, the slave of the material means [*sabab*]. If you were the slave of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), all your affairs would be delegated to Him and all your needs would be left in His charge. Why do you say things when your actions give the lie to what you say? Surely you must have heard the words of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He):

O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? It is most hateful in the sight of Allāh that you say that which you do not do. (61:2,3)

Your angels must be astonished at your impudence. They must be amazed at the extent to which you lie about your actual condition. They must be shocked at the insincerity in your affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawhīd*]. All you ever talk about is the rise and fall of the cost of living, the lifestyles of the rulers and the rich, what so and so likes to eat, what so and so is wearing, how so and so got married, how so and so struck it rich and how so and so lost his fortune. All this stuff is crazy delusion, an abomination and a torment. You must repent, give up your sins and resort to your Lord and to no one but Him. You must remember Him and forget about all others.

Steady adherence to what I say is a sign of faith [*īmān*], while running away from it is a sign of hypocrisy [*nifāq*]. O you who try to discredit me, come over here so that we can rub my condition and yours on the touchstone of the sacred law [*sharʿ*]! Then, if the true condition of one of us turns out to be merely brass and silver, it will be right and proper for him to be discredited and to go off and die in exile. In the Name of Allāh (Exalted is He), come forward and let yourself be seen. Do not play hide and seek like those effeminate types [*makhānīth*]. That is no

good at all; it is crazy foolishness and shilly-shallying. Woe unto you, your report will soon come to light.

O Allāh, relent toward us and do not expose our faults in this world or in the hereafter!

O young man! Your business has not been built on a proper foundation, so your walls are bound to collapse. Your foundation consists of heretical innovations [*bidaʿ*] and errors, while your structure is made of pretense and hypocrisy, so how can you expect it to stand firm? This has all been constructed by passion [*hawāʿ*] and natural impulse [*ṭabʿ*]. You eat, drink, have sexual intercourse and accumulate possessions, all because of the passions and natural inclinations. You have no righteous intention [*niyya ṣāliḥa*] where any of this is concerned. The believer [*muʾmin*] has a righteous intention under all circumstances. He has a righteous intention in all of his actions. He will neither eat nor drink, neither clothe himself nor marry, except at the command of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), and this applies to both this world and the hereafter. In this world He commands him through the medium of His sacred law [*sharʿ*], while in the hereafter He does so directly.

The believer looks at this world and notices how quickly it fades away, so he detaches himself from it. He remembers that his allotted shares are coming to him, and he must receive them according to the testimony of the sacred law [*sharʿ*] and his heart. So he says: "I have no need of this. I do not want it," and his heart runs away to right and left, then he is obliged and compelled to accept them. This is his state in this world. As for his state in the hereafter, he will not open his eye in the presence of the Garden [of Paradise] until he meets his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). If he accepts any part of it, therefore, he will do so only because of a definite command [*amr ḥaẓm*], an order [*taqaddum*] and an instruction [*ishāra*]. Then he will obey the command in fulfillment of the Garden's proper due [*ḥaqq*]. He will discharge the rightful due of the dark-eyed damsels [*ḥūr*] and the young servants, and satisfy those desires. In this he will be in conformity with the Prophets [*anbiyāʾ*], the Messengers [*mursalūn*], the martyrs [*shuhadāʾ*] and the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*], moment by moment or at least almost at every moment, in the sight of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

If you are dutiful toward your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), you will receive happiness from Him whatever your circumstances may be. Surely you must have heard Him say:

Whoever is dutiful toward Allāh, He prepares a way out for him, and provides for him from sources he could never imagine. (65:2,3)

This verse [*āya*] of the Qur'ān has locked the door of reliance on material means [*asbāb*]; it has locked the door of rich men and kings, and it has opened the door of absolute trust in the Lord [*tawakkul*]. If someone is dutifully devoted to Him, He will reward that servant by granting him a relief and a way out of the difficulties that people usually have to suffer. What am I to do with you? How many times do I have to tell you? [In the words of the poet:]

You might make yourself heard if you called to a living soul,
but there is no life at all in the one to whom you are calling.

Your heart is devoid of Islām, of faith [*īmān*] and of conviction [*īqān*]. You have no real experience [*ma'rifa*] and no knowledge [*ilm*], so you are nothing but fantasy, and talking with you is a waste of time. O hypocrites, you are content to use your tongues for talking about absolute trust [in the Creator], while your hearts are making idols of creatures [*mushrika bi'l-khalq*]. My heart is full of fury toward you, out of zeal for the sake of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You had better hold your tongues and stop trying to compete, or else I may burn down your houses on top of you!

O You who keep the salt waters separate from the fresh, keep us separate from causing You displeasure and from protesting to You about Your decrees [*aqdār*]. Let Your mercy form an isthmus [*barzakh*] to keep us separate from sinful disobedience toward You! Āmīn.

O young man! If you are dutifully devoted to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), remembering Him, affirming His Oneness [*muwahhid*] and looking to Him for guidance before you suffer misfortune, then, when misfortune does befall you, He will say to it:

O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham. (21:69)

O Allāh, treat us like this, even if we do not deserve it! Treat us with Your generous kindness. Do not demand of us all that we owe. Do not put us out of Your sight and do not set Yourself against us. Āmīn.

In the case of one who has real experience [*‘arif*], polite behavior [*adab*] is as much an obligatory duty [*farīḍa*] as is repentance in the case of the servant in trouble. How can he fail to be highly refined, when he is the nearest of all creatures to the Creator? If someone behaved with ignorant discourtesy in the society of kings, his rudeness might well result in his being put to death. Anyone who lacks good manners is despised by Creator and creatures alike. Any occasion on which good manners are lacking is an abomination. It is absolutely essential to be well behaved in the company of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must cultivate good behavior. Devote your attention to your life in the hereafter. Turn your interest away from your life in this world, not toward it like the unbelievers [*kuffār*], who find it so interesting and attractive because they know so little about it.

The servant must repent and give up his sins of disobedience, his errors and his mistakes. He must devote himself to fasting [*ṣawm*] during the day and to prayer [*ṣalāt*] during the night. He must eat from what he earns, but only that which is obtained by means that are permissible [*ḥalāl*] according to the sacred law [*shar‘*]. Then, to make further progress, he must become one who practices cautious restraint [*mutawarrī‘*], so he will reduce his profit-making activity for fear of becoming involved in things that are unlawful [*ḥarām*]. Then, as he continues to progress, he will become intensely scrupulous [*munazzah*]. Then he will advance to the point where he becomes a pious abstainer [*zāhid*]. Then he will advance even further, to become one who knows from real experience [*‘arif*], one whose heart is so needy for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) that it will sit in His company and engage in conversation with Him. His heart is empty of creatures, able to do without them but sorely in need of Him. It sits in His company together with the spirits [*arwāḥ*] of His Prophets [*anbiyā’*] and His chosen friends [*aṣfiyā’*], becoming intimately friendly with Him and near to Him. But this is beyond you—and how far beyond you!

Woe unto you! You have no real knowledge of the spiritual states [*aḥwāl*], so why do you talk about them? You have no real knowledge of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so why do you invite other people to come to Him? You are really familiar only with this rich man and this worldly ruler [*sultān*]; you have experienced neither a Messenger [*rasūl*] nor One who sends forth Messengers

[*Mursil*]. You do not consume with cautious moderation [*wara'*]; you only consume by indulging in something unlawful [*ḥarām*]. It is unlawful to consume worldly things by taking advantage of religion [*dīn*].

You are a hypocrite [*munāfiq*], an impostor [*dajjāl*], and I am an implacable hater and smasher of hypocrites, one who can drive them out of their minds. My instruments of destruction will demolish the house of this hypocrite and chase away that faith [*īmān*] he claims to possess. The hypocrite has no weapon at his disposal with which he could put up a fight. He does not have a horse to ride, on which he would be able to maneuver to and fro between creatures and the Creator, between the outer [*ẓāhir*] and the inner [*bāṭin*], between the material means [*sabab*] and the Originator [*Musabbib*], between the law [*ḥukm*] and knowledge [*ʿilm*].

It is with the advent of disasters that a clear picture emerges to reveal the effective influence of faith [*īmān*], the practical result of conviction [*īqān*], and the force of affirming the Oneness [*tawḥīd*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and having absolute trust [*tawakkul*] and confidence [*thiqa*] in Him. Faith is the indisputable evidence [*bayyina*] that must be shown in support of a claim. The believers [*mu'minūn*] fear Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) with their hearts, and on Him and no other they pin their hopes. Before Him and no other they lay down all their needs, resorting to His door and not to the door of any other.

With all His signs [*āthār*], how can you fail to recognize your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)? When someone knows all there is to know about this world, he will renounce it, and when someone really knows the hereafter he will see it as having been created, as having been brought into being [*mukawwana*] after it did not exist, so he will renounce it too, and will attach himself to its Creator. Both this world and the hereafter will seem insignificant to the eyes of his heart, while the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will loom large in the eyes of his innermost being [*sirr*], so he will seek Him to the exclusion of all others. Creatures will seem like tiny specks of dust in his hands; he will see them like children at play, when they are playing with the dirt. He will see the ruling kings dethroned and the rich men deluded by their self-conceit. He will see how those who are preoccupied with anything but their Lord are kept out in the dark.

I see you playing with the Book of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), the Sunna of Allāh's Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) and the words of the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*]. You are playing with all this because of your ignorance. If only you would follow the Book and the Sunna, you would see something marvelous.

[The people of the Lord] never ceased to bear patiently with Him as long as His wishes were being fulfilled, until He eventually granted them what they had been wishing for. To suffer poverty and misfortune with a lack of patience is sheer torment, but when patience is present it is a gracious favor [*karāma*]. Even while the believer is being put to the test, he rejoices in the nearness of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and in his intimate conversation [*munājāt*] with Him, and he feels no desire to get away from his situation.

The market of my words is so sluggish because it does not cater to people's lower selves [*nufūs*] and their passions [*ahwiya*]. This is the end of the age. The market of hypocrisy [*sūq an-nifāq*] is set up in business, while I am trying hard to re-establish the religion [*dīn*] as it was practiced by our Prophet (may Allāh the Exalted bless him and give him peace) and by the Companions [*aṣ-ṣaḥāba*] and those who followed them in his footsteps [*at-tābi'ūn*]. This is the end of the age. As things are now, the object of worship [*ma'būd*] for most of you has come to be the dīnār [gold coin] and the dirham [silver coin]. You have come to be like the people of Moses (peace be upon him):

[Worship of] the calf was made to sink into their hearts. (2:93)

The calf of this era is the dīnār and the dirham.

Woe unto you! How is it that you go seeking prestige [*jāh*] and wealth from this king, and why do you rely so much on him in matters of importance to you, when he will very soon be either deposed or dead? His wealth, his kingship and his prestige will all disappear and he will be carried to his tomb, to the grave that is the home of darkness, desolation, loneliness, sorrow and sadness—and of the worms. He will pass from dominion [*mulk*] to destruction [*hulk*], unless he has to his credit some righteous deed [*ʿamal ṣāliḥ*] and righteous intention [*niyya ṣāliḥa*] for the benefit of his fellow creatures, in which case Allāh will enfold him in His mercy [*raḥma*] and make his reckoning light. You must not place your trust in someone who may be deposed or die, for if you do so your hopes will be dashed and your support will be lost.

As for the believer [*mu'min*], his aspiration [*himmā*] rises above the earth, beyond this world and its sons, and even beyond the hereafter and its sons. He has learned that his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) loves those who set their aspirations high, so his own aspiration soars until it finally reaches Him and alights in His presence, where it falls in prostration. Then He does not allow it to rise from prostration [*sujūd*] until the believer makes an appeal with the heart and the innermost being [*sirr*], whereupon He grants them deputyship [*niyāba*], leadership [*riyāsa*], commanding authority [*imāra*] and control over His creatures. From then on, he lives in this world as a chief, and as a chief in the hereafter, in this world as a king, and as a king in the hereafter.

O my people! Give thanks to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) for His blessings, and do not attribute them to anyone other than Him. Surely you must have heard Him say:

And whatever blessing you enjoy, it is from Allāh. (16:53)

You must seek out the poor and give them presents. You must also try hard to ensure that you are not taken in by the cunning trick of some dishonest, sneaky hypocrite, posing as a beggar when he is actually rich, imitating the poor in his public behavior, his pretended weeping and his abject humility. If one of this sort should ask you for something, you must pause for a moment and seek a ruling from your heart. Perhaps he is in fact a rich man pretending to be poor. See what suggests itself to you. Consult your own opinion, even if the legal experts offer you their opinions [*istafti nafsaka wa-in aftāka'l-muftūn*].

The believer [*mu'min*] is well aware of his fellow creatures. He has ways of reading their signs. His heart is very perceptive [*ḥassās*]. He can see by the light of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), which He has lodged within his heart.

Woe unto you! You are too lazy, so it is certain that nothing will fall into your hand. Your neighbors, your brothers and your close relatives all went off on their travels. They went exploring and digging and they discovered buried treasures. They made a profit of ten or twenty on the dirham and returned successful, while you were just sitting at home. This trifling amount you have in hand will soon be gone, and after that you will be begging from other people.

Woe unto you! You must make serious efforts on the way of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and not just rely on His destiny [*qadar*]. You have surely heard Him say:

As for those who strive in Our cause, We shall guide them to Our paths. (29:69)

You must make a start, then others will come along to complete the work you have begun. Everything is in the hand of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so do not go seeking anything from anyone but Him. Surely you must have heard Him say:

And naught there is, but with Us are the stores thereof, and We send it down only in a known measure. (15:21)

This verse [*āya*] of the Qur’ān leaves one with nothing more to say. O you who go chasing after the dīnār and the dirham, each of them is a thing, and they are both in the hand of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), so do not expect to get them from creatures. Do not try to get them with the tongue of your idolatrous worship [*shirk*] of creatures and your reliance on material means [*asbāb*].

O Allāh! O Creator of all creatures [*yā Khāliq al-khalq*]! O Originator of all material means [*yā Musabbib al-asbāb*]! Deliver us from the snare of associating [*shirk*] Your creatures and Your material means with You, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

The Shaikh (may Allāh be well pleased with him) also went on to say:

O servants of Allāh, you are in the abode of [Divine] Wisdom [*dār al-ḥikma*], so you cannot get by without mediating assistance [*wāsiṭa*]. You must ask your Master [*Ma’būd*] to supply you with a physician who can offer medical treatment for the diseases of your hearts, a therapist who can give you therapy, a guide who can give you guidance and take you by the hand. You must stick close to those who are close to Him and who have learned how to behave in His presence, to the guardians [*ḥujjāb*] of His nearness and the keepers of His door.

You have been content to serve your own lower selves [*nufūs*] and to follow your own whims [*ahwā'*] and natural tendencies [*ṭibā'*]. I have a better moral character than any of you, and I am more impertinent than any of you when the interests of the religion [*dīn*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) are at stake. You must not take instruction from those who indulge their lower selves, groveling for the favor of worldly kings and waiting on them patiently like insignificant specks of dust. They neither tell people to obey His commandments nor order them to observe His prohibitions. If they ever do so, they do it hypocritically and artificially. May Allāh cleanse the earth of them and of every hypocrite there is, unless He relents toward them and guides them to His door!

I feel jealous rage whenever I hear someone saying “Allāh, Allāh,” while he can see anything other than Him. O you who practice remembrance [*yā dhākir*], remember Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) while you are in His presence! Do not chant His name with your tongue, while your heart is otherwise engaged. Whether a person is hostile toward me or feels affection for me, it makes no difference as far as I am concerned. I no longer have any friend or any foe on the face of the earth. This is in the context of genuinely affirming the Divine Unity [*tawhīd*] and regarding creatures as essentially powerless. As for anyone who is dutifully devoted to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), of course he is my friend, just as anyone who disobeys Him is my enemy; the former is the friend of my faith [*ṣadiq imānī*], while the latter is its enemy.

O Allāh, make this a reality for me, make it demonstrably true, confirm me in it and make it a gift, not a loan!

This not something that comes about merely through pretentious claims, ascetic behavior and wishful thinking, through dropping names and titles and wagging one's tongue. It can only come about through honesty [*ṣidq*] and sincerity [*ikhlās*], through giving up pretense [*riyā'*] and opposing the lower self [*nafs*], the passions [*hawā*] and the devil [*shaiṭān*]. Be sensible! As far as I can see, you have neither hearts nor any real knowledge [*ma'rifa*] of the heart. Your lower selves [*nufūs*] are undisciplined and uneducated; they are full of pride and haughty arrogance.

On the path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) there is no 'I' or 'mine' or 'belonging with me' [*lā anā wa-lī wa-mā'ī*]. The whole of this path is annihilation [*maḥw*] and extinction [*fanā*] [of the self]. At the outset, while faith [*īmān*] is still weak, it is *lā ilāha illa'llāh* ["There is none worthy of worship except the One Almighty God"], but at the end, when faith is strong, it is *lā ilāha illā Anta* ["There is none worthy of worship except You"], because He is now being addressed directly, face to face in His own presence.

Anyone who looks to creatures to supply his needs is blind to the door of the Creator. He has neither served Him nor sought to befriend Him. If only he had served Him during his youth, He would have enriched him in his adult life. He gives even to those who fail to serve Him, so how could He not give to those who do serve Him? As the believer grows older, his faith [*īmān*] grows stronger and he becomes independent of creatures because of his nearness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He becomes independent of them even if he never had the tiniest thing, neither a morsel nor a rag to call his own.

Sit up and take notice of what I have to say! Do not shrug it off your shoulders. I am really very real indeed [*innī aḥaqqu ḥaqqan fī ḥaqq*]. I am speaking from experience [*an tajriba*]. I can see that most of you are out of touch with reality. You lay claim to Islām, yet you have no idea of its real nature [*ḥaqīqa*]. Woe unto you! The name of Islām sits upon you, and that is all there is to it. It does you no good. You practice its requirements outwardly [*zāhiran*], not inwardly [*bāṭinan*]. Your practice does not amount to anything.

The Night of Power [*lailatu'l-qadr*] has a distinctive sign that can be recognized by the righteous [*ṣāliḥūn*] among the servants of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He). For some of them the veil is lifted from their eyes, so they can see the light of the banners that are held in the hands of the angels, the light of their faces, the light of the gates of the heavens and the light of the countenance of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), because on that night He manifests Himself [*yatajallā*] to the people of the earth.

When the servant really knows [*arafa*] the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), He draws his heart completely near, gives him all He has to give, accords him every mark of intimate

friendship [*uns*], and confers upon him every honor. Then, when he has come to take all this for granted, He takes it away from him, reduces him to empty-handed poverty, sends him back to his ordinary self and sets up a screen between Himself and his servant. He is testing him to see how he will act, whether he will run away or stand firm. Then, if he stands firm, He removes the obstacles from him and restores him to the situation he had once enjoyed.

Al-Junaid (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) never tired of saying: "What do I care about me? The slave and all he possesses belong to his Master [*Mawlā*]." He had surrendered [*sallama*] his own self [*nafs*] to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Having given up his freedom to choose and compete, he was content to be governed by his Lord's destiny [*qadar*] for him. His heart was righteous and his lower self had been tamed, so he put into practice the words of his Lord:

My Protecting Friend is Allāh, who has revealed the Book, and He befriends the righteous. (7:196)

Al-Fuḍail ibn 'Iyād (may the mercy of Allāh be upon him) would say to Sufyān ath-Thawrī whenever he met him: "Come, let us weep over the foreknowledge [*ilm*] that Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) has about us!" What an excellent saying this is. These are the words of one who has real experience [*ʿarīf*] of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), one who has knowledge [*ʿālim*] of Him and His ways of operating [*taṣāwīf*]. What is the foreknowledge of Allāh to which he referred? The reference is to His words:

These are bound for the Garden [of Paradise] and I do not care, and these are bound for the Fire [of Hell] and I do not care.

Having mingled the whole of this together as a single statement, he was left wondering which of the two parties he might belong to. The people [of the Lord] are not dazzled by the appearance of their deeds, because deeds are valued according to the seals that are ultimately fixed upon them.

Worldly kings have come to be gods [*āliha*] for many people. This world, riches, good health, power and abilities have all become gods. Woe unto you! You have mistaken the branch for a root, the recipient of nourishment for a provider, the possession for an owner, the poor beggar for someone who is rich, the weakling for someone who is strong,

the corpse for a living being. You are quite unworthy of respect, and we shall neither follow you nor accept your doctrine [*madhhab*]. Far from it! We shall keep well away from you, on the hill of safety [*salāma*], on the hill of the Sunna and the renunciation of heretical innovations [*bida'*], on the hill of the affirmation of Divine Unity [*tawhīd*], of sincerity [*ikhhlās*], of the renunciation of pretense and hypocrisy, of regarding creatures as essentially powerless, weak and subject to coercion. When you glorify the tyrants [*jabābira*] of this world, its Pharaohs, its kings and its men of wealth, and when you forget Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) and do not glorify Him, then the verdict [*ḥukm*] on you will be the verdict that applies to those who worship idols [*aṣnām*]. You cause what you glorify to become your idol.

Woe unto you! You must worship the Creator of the idols, then the idols will appear contemptible to you. Draw near to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), then creatures will draw near to you. In proportion to your reverence for Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He), His creatures will revere you. In proportion to your love for Him, His creatures will love you. In proportion to your fear of Him, His creatures will be afraid of you. In proportion to your respect for His commandments and His prohibitions, His creatures will treat you with respect. In proportion to your proximity to Him, His creatures will move close to you. In proportion to your service to Him, His creatures will serve you.

Remembering death is a remedy for the diseases of the lower selves [*nufūs*] and it is a trainer's staff [*miqma'a*] over their heads. I have spent many years practicing the frequent remembrance of death, by night and by day. I have prospered through my remembrance of it, and I have brought my lower self [*nafs*] under control through practicing that remembrance. There have been certain nights when I would remember death and would weep from the beginning of the night right through to the early morning [*ṣaḥar*]. During one such a night I was weeping as I said: "My God [*ilāhī*], I beg You not to let the Angel of Death [*malak al-mawt*] take my spirit [*rūḥ*] away, but to deal with its removal Yourself." Then, although my eyes were closed, I saw an old man with handsome features. As he came in through the door, I said to him, "Who are you?" and he replied, "I am the Angel of Death." So I said to him, "But I have asked Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) to take charge of the removal of my spirit Himself, instead of letting you remove it." Then

he said, “Why did you ask Him for that? What sin am I guilty of? I am just a servant under orders. I am commanded to go gently with some folk and to handle some folk roughly.” He gave me a hug and wept, and I wept with him. Then I woke up and found myself shedding tears.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (may the mercy of Allāh the Exalted be upon him) used to say: “Dear to me are hearts that have been scorched by the love of this world, and yet their breasts have compiled more of the Qur’ān than righteous brethren who stand and bow and prostrate themselves [in prayer], and who command what is right and fair [*ma’rūf*] and forbid what is wrong and unfair. [They are dear to me because] these are the ones whose pious caution [*wara’*] has restrained their hands from worldly acquisition, and whose aspiration [*himma*] has been the quest for their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Spend your money on them, for they will have an empire [*dawla*] tomorrow in the presence of Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He).”

Someone asked him: “Which is more intense, the fire of fear or the fire of yearning [*shawq*]?”

To this he replied:

“The fire of fear in the case of the seeker [*murīd*], and the fire of yearning in the case of the sought [*murād*]. The former is one thing, and the latter is something else. Which of the two fires do you experience, O questioner?”

One who relies on material means [*asbāb*], your Benefactor [*Nāfi’*] is One, and One is He who causes you harm [*Dārr*]. Your King is One, your Sultan is One, and your God [*Ilāh*] is One. You must surely have heard Him say:

Whoever hopes to meet his Lord, let him do righteous work, and make none sharer in the worship due unto his Lord. (18:110)

You are [your own obstacle] between you and your Lord. Get away from you, then you will see Him. Someone asked: “How can I get away from ‘I’?” So I told him: “Get clear of your own lower self [*nafs*] by opposing it, struggling against it and turning a deaf ear to its demands. You must not respond to its cravings, its lustful desires and its frivolous inclinations, then it will become submissive and withdraw from the

sight of your heart. It will come to be a discarded lump of flesh without movement, then the spirit of tranquillity [*rūḥ at-ṭuma'nīna*] will creep into it. Once the spirit of its being [*wujūd*] has gone out of it, the spirit of tranquillity will creep into it. At this stage both it and the heart will see their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). When it has become tame [*muṭma'inna*] and cooperative [*musā'ida*], a spirit different from the previous spirit will be breathed into it: the spirit of Lordship [*rubūbiyya*], the spirit of intelligence [*'aql*], the spirit of detachment from creatures, the spirit of being with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), the spirit of having quiet confidence in Him and shying away from all others."

Someone who is sincere [*ṣādiq*] in his practice will take his leave of the Shaikhs and pass on beyond them. He will signal to them: "Stay there where you are, while I move on to the place you have shown me how to reach." The Shaikhs are a doorway. Can it be a good thing to stay put at the door and never enter the house?

And Allāh coins parables for mankind. (14:25)

Have faith in Allāh and His Messenger. Believe the words of Allāh and what His Messenger has conveyed. The foundation of attainment [*wuṣūl*] to Allāh (Almighty and Glorious is He) is faith [*īmān*]. The foundation of all goodness is faith. Sincerity [*ikhhlās*] is the foundation of Prophethood [*nubuwwa*] and Prophethood is the foundation of Messengership [*risāla*]. It [sincerity] is also the foundation of the degrees of Walī, Badal, Ghawth and Quṭb [*wa-huwa asās al-wilāya wa'l-badaliyya wa'l-ghawthiyya wa'l-quṭbiyya*].

Concerning the Author, Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī

A Brief Introduction by the Translator¹

The Author’s Names and Titles

A rich store of information about the author of *The Sublime Revelation* is conveniently available, to those familiar with the religious and spiritual tradition of Islām, in his names, his surnames, and the many titles conferred upon him by his devoted followers. It is not unusual for these to take up several lines in an Arabic manuscript, but let us start with the short form of the author’s name as it appears on the cover and title page of this book: *Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī*.

Shaikh: A term applied throughout the Islamic world to respected persons of recognized seniority in learning, experience and wisdom. Its basic meaning in Arabic is “an elder; a man over fifty years of age.” (The spellings *Sheikh* and *Shaykh* may also be encountered in English-language publications.)

‘Abd al-Qādir: This is the author’s personal name, meaning “Servant [or Slave] of the All-Powerful.” (The form *‘Abdul Qādir*, which the reader may come across elsewhere, is simply an alternative transliteration of the Arabic spelling.) It has always been a common practice, in the Muslim community, to give a male child a name in which *‘Abd* is prefixed to one of the Names of Allāh.

al-Jīlānī: A surname ending in *-ī* will often indicate the bearer’s place of birth. Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir was born in the Iranian district of Gīlān,

¹ Reproduced for the convenience of the reader, with slight modifications from the version printed on pp. xiii-xix of: Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. *Revelations of the Unseen (Futūḥ al-Ghaib)*. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Houston, Texas: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1992.

south of the Caspian Sea, in A.H. 470/1077-8 C.E. (In some texts, the Persian spelling *Gilānī* is used instead of the arabicized form *al-Jīlānī*. The abbreviated form *al-Jīlī*, which may also be encountered, should not be confused with the surname of the venerable ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, author of the celebrated work *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, who came from Jīl in the district of Baghdād.)

Let us now consider a slightly longer version of the Shaikh’s name, as it occurs near the beginning of *Al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī* [*The Sublime Revelation*]: *Sayyidunā ‘sh-Shaikh Muḥyi’ d-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir (Raḍiya’llāhu ‘anh)*.

Sayyidunā ‘sh-Shaikh: “Our Master, the Shaikh.” A writer who regards himself as a Qādirī, a devoted follower of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, will generally refer to the latter as *Sayyidunā* [our Master], or *Sayyidī* [my Master].

Muḥyi’ d-Dīn: “Reviver of the Religion.” It is widely acknowledged by historians, non-Muslim as well as Muslim, that Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir displayed great courage in reaffirming the traditional teachings of Islām, in an era when sectarianism was rife, and when materialistic and rationalistic tendencies were predominant in all sections of society. In matters of Islamic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] and theology [*kalām*], he adhered quite strictly to the highly “orthodox” school of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

Abū Muḥammad: “Father of Muḥammad.” In the Arabic system of nomenclature, a man’s surnames usually include the name of his first-born son, with the prefix *Abū* [Father of—].

Raḍiya’llāhu ‘anh: “May Allāh be well pleased with him!” This benediction is the one customarily pronounced—and spelled out in writing—after mentioning the name of a Companion of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace). The preference for this particular invocation is yet another mark of the extraordinary status held by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir in the eyes of his devoted followers.

Finally, we must note some important elements contained within this even longer version: *al-Ghawth al-A‘ẓam Sulṭān al-Awliyā’ Sayyidunā ‘sh-Shaikh Muḥyi’ d-Dīn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥusainī (Raḍiya’llāhu ‘anh)*.

al-Ghawth al-A‘ẓam: “The Supreme Helper” (or, “The Mightiest Succor”). *Ghawth* is an Arabic word meaning: (1) A cry for aid or succor. (2) Aid, help, succor; deliverance from adversity. (3) The chief of the Saints, who is empowered by Allāh to bring succor to suffering humanity, in response to His creatures’ cry for help in times of extreme adversity.

Sultān al-Awliyā’: “The Sultan of the Saints.” This reinforces the preceding title, emphasizing the supremacy of the *Ghawth* above all other orders of sanctity.

al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥusainī: “The descendant of both al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusain, the grandsons of the Prophet (Allāh bless him and give him peace).” To quote the Turkish author, Shaikh Muzaffer Ozak Efendi (may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him): “The lineage of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir is known as the Chain of Gold, since both his parents were descendants of the Messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace). His noble father, ‘Abdullāh, traced his descent by way of Imām Ḥasan, while his revered mother, Umm al-Khair, traced hers through Imām Ḥusain.”

As for the many other surnames, titles and honorific appellations that have been conferred upon Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, it may suffice at this point to mention *al-Bāẓ al-Ashhab* [The Gray Falcon].

The Author’s Life in Baghdād

Through the mists of legend surrounding the life of Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, it is possible to discern the outlines of the following biographical sketch:

In A.H. 488, at the age of eighteen, he left his native province to become a student in the great capital city of Baghdād, the hub of political, commercial and cultural activity, and the center of religious learning in the world of Islām. After studying traditional sciences under such teachers as the prominent Ḥanbalī jurist [*faqīh*], Abū Sa’d ‘Alī al-Mukharrimī, he encountered a more spiritually oriented instructor in the saintly person of Abu’l-Khair Ḥammād ad-Dabbās. Then, instead of embarking on his own professorial career, he abandoned the city and spent twenty-five years as a wanderer in the desert regions of ‘Irāq.

He was over fifty years old by the time he returned to Baghdād, in A.H. 521/1127 C.E., and began to preach in public. His hearers were profoundly affected by the style and content of his lectures, and his reputation grew and spread through all sections of society. He moved into the school [*madrasa*] belonging to his old teacher al-Mukharrimī, but the premises eventually proved inadequate. In A.H. 528, pious donations were applied to the construction of a residence and guest-house [*ribāṭ*], capable of housing the Shaikh and his large family, as well as providing accommodation for his pupils and space for those who came from far and wide to attend his regular sessions [*majālis*].

He lived to a ripe old age, and continued his work until his very last breath, as we know from the accounts of his final moments recorded in the Addendum to Revelations of the Unseen.

In the words of Shaikh Muzaffer Ozak Efendi: "The venerable 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī passed on to the Realm of Divine Beauty in A.H. 561/1166 C.E., and his blessed mausoleum in Baghdād is still a place of pious visitation. He is noted for his extraordinary spiritual experiences and exploits, as well as his memorable sayings and wise teachings. It is rightly said of him that 'he was born in love, grew in perfection, and met his Lord in the perfection of love.' May the All-Glorious Lord bring us in contact with his lofty spiritual influence!"

The Author's Literary Works

***Al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī* [The Sublime Revelation].** A collection of sixty-two discourses delivered by Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir in the years A.H. 545-546/1150-1152 C.E. Arabic text published by Dār al-Albāb, Damascus, n.d. Arabic text with Urdu translation: Madīna Publishing Co., Karachi, 1989. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Houston, Texas: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1992.

Even a non-Muslim scholar like D.S. Margoliouth was so favorably impressed by the content and style of *Al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī* that he wrote:² "The sermons included in [this work] are some of the very best in Muslim literature: the spirit which they breathe is one of charity and philanthropy: the preacher would like to 'close the gates of Hell and open those of Paradise to all mankind.' He employs Ṣūfī technicalities very rarely, and none that would occasion the ordinary reader much difficulty...."

² In his article "'Abd al-Qādir" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (also printed in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1961).

Malḥūzāt [Utterances]. A loosely organized compilation of talks and sayings by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir, almost equal in total length to Revelations of the Unseen. Frequently treated as a kind of appendix or supplement to manuscript and printed versions of *Al-Faṭḥ ar-Rabbānī*. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Houston, Texas: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1992.

Futūḥ al-Ghaib [Revelations of the Unseen]. A collection of seventy-eight discourses. The Arabic text, edited by Muḥammad Ṣālim al-Bawwāb, has been published by Dār al-Albāb, Damascus, 1986. German translation: W. Braune. *Die Futūḥ al-Gaib des ‘Abd al-Qādir*. Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1933. English translations: (1) M. Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad. *Futuh Al-Ghaib [The Revelations of the Unseen]*. Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf. Repr. 1986. (2) Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. *Revelations of the Unseen (Futūḥ al-Ghaib)*. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Houston, Texas: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1992.

Sirr al-Asrār [The Secret of Secrets]. A short work, divided into twenty-four chapters, in which “the realities within our faith and our path are divulged.” English translation: *The Secret of Secrets by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī*, interpreted by Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti. Cambridge, England: The Islamic Texts Society, 1992.

Jalā’ al-Khawāṭir [The Removal of Cares]. A collection of forty-five discourses by Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir. Arabic text with Urdu translation published by Maktaba Nabawiyya, Lahore, n.d. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1997.

Al-Ḡhunya li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq [Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth]. Arabic text published in two parts by Dār al-Albāb, Damascus, n.d., 192 pp. + 200 pp. Translated from the Arabic (in 5 vols.) by Muhtar Holland. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1997.

Khamsata ‘Ashara Maktūban [Fifteen Letters]. Translated from Persian into Arabic by ‘Alī ibn Ḥusāmu ‘d-dīn al-Muttaqī, and from Arabic into English by Muhtar Holland. Hollywood, Florida: Al-Baz Publishing, Inc., 1997.

Other works attributed to Shaikh ‘Abd al-Qādir include short treatises on some of the Divine Names; litanies [*awrād/aḥzāb*]; prayers and supplications [*da‘awāt/munājāt*]; mystical poems [*qaṣā’id*].

May Allāh forgive our mistakes and failings, and may He bestow His blessings upon all connected with our project—especially our gracious readers! Āmīn.

Muhtar Holland

About the Translator

Muhtar Holland was born in 1935, in the ancient city of Durham in the North East of England. This statement may be considered anachronistic, however, since he did not bear the name Muhtar until 1969, when he was moved—by powerful experiences in the *latihan kejiwaan* of Subud—to embrace the religion of Islām.*

At the age of four, according to an entry in his father's diary, he said to a man who asked his name: "I'm a stranger to myself." During his years at school, he was drawn most strongly to the study of languages, which seemed to offer signposts to guide the stranger on his "Journey Home," apart from their practical usefulness to one who loved to spend his vacations traveling—at first on a bicycle—through foreign lands. Serious courses in Latin, Greek, French, Spanish and Danish, with additional smatterings of Anglo-Saxon, Italian, German and Dutch. Travels in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. Then a State Scholarship and up to Balliol College, Oxford, for a degree course centered on the study of Arabic and Turkish. Travels in Turkey and Syria. Then National Service in the Royal Navy, with most of the two years spent on an intensive course in the Russian language.

In the years since graduation from Oxford and Her Majesty's Senior Service, Mr. Holland has held academic posts at the University of Toronto, Canada; at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, England (with a five-month leave to study Islamic Law in Cairo, Egypt); and at the Universiti Kebangsaan in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (followed by a six-month sojourn in Indonesia). He also worked as Senior Research Fellow at the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, England, and as Director of the Nūr al-Islām Translation Center in Valley Cottage, New York.

* The name Muhtar was received at that time from Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, of Wisma Subud, Jakarta, in response to a request for a suitable Muslim name. In strict academic transliteration from the Arabic, the spelling would be *Mukhtār*. The form *Muchtar* is probably more common in Indonesia than *Muhtar*, which happens to coincide with the modern Turkish spelling of the name.

His freelance activities have mostly been devoted to writing and translating in various parts of the world, including Scotland and California. He made his Pilgrimage [*Hajj*] to Mecca in 1980.

Published works include the following:

Al-Ghazālī. *On the Duties of Brotherhood*. Translated from the Classical Arabic by Muhtar Holland. London: Latimer New Dimensions, 1975. New York: Overlook Press, 1977. Repr. 1980 and 1993.

Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi. *The Unveiling of Love*. Translated from the Turkish by Muhtar Holland. New York: Inner Traditions, 1981. Westport, Ct.: Pir Publications, 1990.

Ibn Taymīya. *Public Duties in Islām*. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Leicester, England: Islamic Foundation, 1982.

Hasan Shushud. *Masters of Wisdom of Central Asia*. Translated from the Turkish by Muhtar Holland. Ellingsstring, England: Coombe Springs Press, 1983.

Al-Ghazālī. *Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship*. Translated from the Arabic by Muhtar Holland. Leicester, England: Islamic Foundation, 1983.

Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi. *Irshād*. Translated [from the Turkish] with an Introduction by Muhtar Holland. Warwick, New York: Amity House, 1988. Westport, Ct.: Pir Publications, 1990.

Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi. *Blessed Virgin Mary*. Translation from the original Turkish by Muhtar Holland. Westport, Ct.: Pir Publications, 1991.

Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi. *The Garden of Dervishes*. Translation from the original Turkish by Muhtar Holland. Westport, Ct.: Pir Publications, 1991.

Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi. *Adornment of Hearts*. Translation from the original Turkish by Muhtar Holland and Sixtina Friedrich. Westport, Ct.: Pir Publications, 1991.

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